







# ESSAYS

WRITTEN IN THE INTERVALS OF BUSINESS

BY

SIR ARTHUR HELPS

WITH

INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND QUESTIONS

BY

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Calcutta :

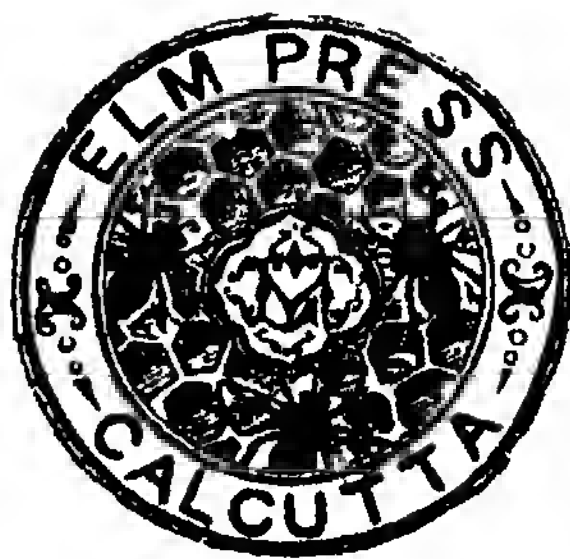
S. K. LAHIRI & CO.,

PUBLISHERS AND BOOKSELLERS, 54, COLLEGE STREET.

1894.



PRINTED BY LAHIRI AND MITRA,



20, BEADON STREET.

- 1873. *Some talk about Animals and their Masters.*
- 1874. *Ivan de Biron* (a philosophical Romance).
- 1875. *Social Pressure* (a series of Essays and Conversations on town-population and other subjects).

The first work, *Thoughts in the Cloister and the Crowd*, published anonymously when Helps was only twenty one years of age, contains such fine reflections expressed tersely and elegantly, that it gave great promise of future eminence—a promise which some people think has hardly been adequately fulfilled, great as the literary reputation of Helps undoubtedly is. His next publication consisted of the *Essays* in the text, which will be more fully dealt with in the next section. It was in this department of literature that Helps most excelled; and in his later works in the same line—the best of which are *Friends in Council* and *Social Pressure*—he hit upon the idea of introducing conversations between the Essays to make the whole very entertaining reading. These conversations have perhaps never been surpassed. Besides the weighty and lively observations with which they abound, they have quite a dramatic character,—the role of mild cynicism and good-humoured satire assigned to Ellesmere being especially admirable. Milverton (who, one might safely say, represents the author himself) is the name given to the leading essayist, and his part (to which that of Ellesmere is a sort of set-off) is that of an earnest thinker and writer on all subjects concerning the well-being of society. He perceives clearly the manifold evils and inconveniences of the existing state of things, but is at the same time far from being a pessimist; he sees the constant need of effort to make things better, and is not without hopes of success. His tone is precisely that of the author speaking in his own person, as he does in these *Essays* and elsewhere. The other leading characters in *Friends in Council* (and other books of the same kind, which are so many continuations of it) are Midhurst the pessimist, Dunsford the kind-hearted clergyman, Sir Arthur Godolphin the wise and learned statesman, Craumer the matter-of-fact official, and Mauleverer the admirer of past times. All these generally speak in character, and a difference even in language is often observed. The serious, almost melancholy cast of the author's mind is most apparent in *Companions of My Solitude*, in which Milverton speaks in the first person, the melancholy which the reflections breathe is

however, by no means unhealthy ; indeed the tenth chapter of the book offers truer and more effectual consolation to a large class of unfortunate people than is perhaps to be found anywhere else in literature. *Realmah*, the best of his philosophical stories, takes the reader back to pre-historic times, to the Bronze Age in fact. It is a work of the same class as More's *Utopia*, or Lytton's *Coming Race*, it is a description of the imaginary inhabitants of one of the Lake-districts in Switzerland, who are known (from recent geological researches) to have dwelt in towns, of which the houses were built on piles on a lake. Realmah is the name of the thoughtful man who comes to rule over the Sheviri, teaches them to smelt iron and use iron weapons, and introduces certain wise reforms in manners and government. The story is read out to the Friends chapter by chapter—there being very instructive conversations at the end of each. *Casimir Maremma* is also a clever work, of the same type but by no means so brilliant ; and *Ivan de Biron* proved even less successful. As regards his historical works, he was led, by his deep interest in the question of Slavery, to trace the growth of Negro Slavery in America, and then to study the history of the European conquest and colonisation of that continent ; and the fruit of that study he gave to the world in the shape of a History of the Spanish conquest of America and the separate biographies of Cortes and Pizarro—the best known of those conquerors. These books are however, comparatively little known.

Besides essays, romances, and histories, Helps wrote in his early life (probably in imitation of his friend Sir Henry Taylor) some dramas, which were by no means successful.

The *Thoughts upon Government*—the longest and perhaps the most pretentious of his Essays—is a thoughtful book containing a great many sound practical suggestions, and may be read with great advantage in connection with the later Essays of the second series (those on Councils &c. and on Party Spirit in particular) in our text.

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## SECTION II.

## ESSAYS ON THE INTERVALS OF BUSINESS.

**First Series.** The two series of Essays brought together in the present volume are markedly different from each other, though they have such common characteristics as might be looked for in the productions of the same mind. The essays of the first group are addressed to the general reader, though especially interesting to men of culture and pursuit similar to those of the author. They are written for men of the world by one of their number; they breathe a lofty moral tone, but are at the same time practical in spirit, and full of strong common sense. As he is careful to tell us himself in the opening essay and elsewhere, a worldly man need not (and should not) be a slave to mere expediency; nor should his interests and pursuits be purely those of a seeker after wealth, power, or reputation. It is because Helps does not affect to despise the world in the character of a cultured, imaginative and benevolent man, nor to pity men of the latter kind in the character of a man of the world, that his moral teaching is so effective. It is neither "harsh and crabbed" on the one hand, nor, on the other, is it comfortable and easy-going. He would encourage caution and prudence, and yet believes in generous impulses; he insists on the necessity of having strong principles, and yet advises us to keep an open mind, ready to revise our principles in the light of reason and experience. And at the same time, there is nothing paradoxical, no propounding of moral enigmas, no casuistry. He hardly ever strays into debatable ground in search of subtle moral distinctions, happy parallels, or weighty aphorisms, and yet his observations even on the most familiar subjects are never quite commonplace. There is the stamp of a strong, clear intellect and upright character in all his utterances. And one feels that the writer has not overlooked any important consideration though he is by no means elaborate in his treatment of a subject, or ostentatiously impartial in giving the arguments for and against his own view. In fact he gives us the results of his thought—his suggestions and counsels; he seldom argues, though he avoids an appearance of being dogmatic by indicating the line of thought which has led up to a remark. His counsels are eminently reasonable; the longer we listen

to him, the stronger becomes our conviction that it is foolish to be mean, insincere, uncharitable, or harsh.

**Moral Teaching.** What he lays most stress on, and is never tired of impressing on the reader, is the need for sympathy, charity or tolerance. He holds that a great part of the suffering which men endure and inflict on others—both within and beyond the domestic circle,—is due to narrowness. He deplores the common inability to enter into, and make allowance for, the tastes sentiments and prejudices of others ; and shows how desirable it is to exercise our imagination in the service of charity. Hardly inferior in importance to the lesson of charity and tolerance, is the lesson of duty—duty in a wide sense, embracing not merely domestic, official, and professional obligations, but kindness and service to our country, to humanity, and even to the brute creation. And his practical spirit shows itself in the advice that we should not indulge in day dreams or romantic ideas on the subject, and instead of waiting for “dainty duties”, should quietly perform those that are before us, making the best use of present opportunities. The lesson of contentment taught in the second essay is also one that Helps is very earnest about, as he deals with it again and again in his other works. With him contentment does not imply the absence of desire or effort—the apathy or philosophical calm of stoic and ascetic moralists ; it is against vain regrets, ingenious self-torment, exclusive and over-eager pursuit of worldly aims &c., that he would have us guard ourselves. In the third essay, while recognising the necessity of self-examination and self-reform, he does not encourage morbid introspection, and relies more on culture and enlarged sympathies. It is in this essay too, that Helps gives a quasi-philosophical explanation of his attitude in regard to all such questions, into which he says, “spirit and form must both enter” ; and he proceeds, by way of an illustration, to point out how the success of self discipline depends on neglecting neither prudential considerations, nor such a source of strength as earnest prayer affords. In this connection the deeply earnest and even solemn tone in which he denounces the mockery of mere formal prayer, is characteristic of the man. The lesson of charity and caution in judging of others, which forms the subject of the next Essay, has already been referred to. It should be noticed, however, in illustration

of the practical side of all Helps's teaching, that he is not content with impressing upon the reader the difficulty of arriving at correct judgments of others, but that he recognises the constant necessity, in daily life, of forming such judgments, and proceeds to lay down the data on which more or less reliable judgments may be based. And he concludes with a reference to what is so familiar, yet so faintly recognized,—the hopeless misunderstanding of each other's thoughts and feelings amongst those who live together—parents and children, servants or subordinates and masters ; etc. The subject of the next essay—*On the Exercise of Benevolence*, has also been already noticed. Perhaps no other essay so well shows how naturally the author reconciles his high tone of morality—worthy of the most earnest and unselfish Christian—with an unmistakeably practical spirit. The Essay on *Domestic Rule*, one of the most admirable and useful in the whole collection, begins by insisting on a full recognition of the duties of the head of a family—duties peculiarly liable to be ignored or slighted, because little enforced by public opinion ; for an Englishman's house is his castle, and he resents, as unpardonably officious, any advice or pressure brought to bear upon him in his domestic sphere. He points out the mistake of assuming a harsh demeanour to preserve respect, and of trying to effect by force and fear that moral discipline of those under his charge, which only uniform kindness, personal example, sincerity, and gentle persuasion can bring about. He shows how dangerous it is to permit those practices which one pretends outwardly to disapprove of, and to employ such strong remedies as ridicule which often nip a youngster's good resolves in the bud. And he concludes with a few brief suggestions exceedingly well chosen, in the form of detached maxims. The two concluding essays—*On Advice* and *On Secrecy* are very subtle, and contain a great many useful suggestions. Generally speaking, we may say that he inculcates prudence, straightforwardness, and a delicate regard for the feelings and interests of others. These three virtues are indeed those which he takes occasion most frequently to teach.

**Second Series.** The second group of essays is avowedly intended for men of business ; and the precepts while useful for business men generally, are evidently framed with special reference to the requirements of statesmen. This is particular-



ly the case with the concluding essays. Though the practical spirit, which is never wanting in the teaching of Helps, is more pronounced in this series of essays, they are not worldly in the lower sense of the word : expediency is never made to override higher considerations—love of truth takes the foremost place among the qualifications of a man of business.—principles for the guidance of conduct are vigorously insisted on—moral courage and a deep sense of responsibility have precedence over business qualities commonly so called. And in the essays that follow, “juggling dexterity” and cunning are emphatically condemned, while the legitimate use of dexterity is fully recognised, and exceedingly subtle and clever suggestions abound in all the essays for “circumventing” the cunning of others ;—“a bold but not unkind sincerity” is prescribed as the “groundwork of all one’s dealings”—frankness, hearty confidence, and just and delicate appreciation of services are recommended in the treatment of agents—false delicacy is, as scrupulously to be avoided as unnecessary harshness, in refusing to grant a suit. The concluding essay on Party spirit may seem rather out of place in this series ; but it may be said that the conduct of statesmen (the class of business men for whom most of the second series of essays are principally intended) is so largely influenced by party-spirit, that observations on this last subject are by no means uncalled for. In dealing with this great question, Helps seems perfectly at home ; his style reaches its highest vigour and polish, when depouncing rabid, virulent partisanship as demoralising to the people and a source of weakness to the state. The chief lesson taught here is the need for greater charity, tolerance and love of truth in party dealings—as in all other departments of social intercourse. At the same time the necessity of party division, and the importance of that deep and ardent interest in political affairs which party-spirit fosters, are fully recognised, and political indifference is condemned as a remedy at once ineffective and mischievous. In fact no essay better illustrates the author’s remarkable absence of cynicism ; for here the subject offers a great temptation to be cynical.

**Style.** The highest praise that any writer of the class to which Helps belongs can claim for his style, is that it is perfectly suited to the subject-matter. And to this praise Helps may be said to be fairly entitled. The essays are written in a style at once attractive and impressive, simple yet not

ostentatiously such. But though in point of vigour and polish the essays in the present collection are not inferior (and may even be said to be somewhat superior) to his later productions, the essays in *Friends in Council* and *Social Pressure* seem to show that in other respects our author's style improved with practice ; for these latter excel in ease and simplicity, while they are more unequal in point of execution. The reader is inclined to wish that instead of confining himself to mere maxims and general statements, the author had introduced into the essays concrete examples and illustrations ; for the youthful reader, to whom these essays are so useful, does not often possess the knowledge of life and of history necessary to illustrate many of the opinions and precepts in the text, and to bring them home to the mind. One of the principal charms of his style consists in the utter absence of all affectation, all straining after effect. It has already been remarked that Helps almost invariably resists the temptation to indulge in paradox, though the nature of his remarks often seems to lend itself very readily to paradoxical statement, and to make the temptation a strong one. But this is only one of the ways in which the straightforward manly sincerity of the writer shows itself. For he is equally free from other forms of exaggeration. The besetting sin of the essayist—one to which many great writers of that class must plead guilty—is the tendency to state his opinions too strongly, to give point to his remarks by striking antitheses, clever strokes of cynicism, and other artifices.

**Imagery.** Besides the qualities of style already referred to, these essays exhibit a felicity of imagery truly admirable ; the author's wit and poetical fancy, which is as a rule, kept under restraint, find occasional vent in happy analogies and other images serving to adorn and illustrate his maxims and principles. As examples of this feature of our author's style, the following may be cited. Councils, commissions are spoken of as "fly-wheels and safety valves of the machinery of business." Councillors with a judicial intellect "bring back the subject matter when it has all but floated away, while others have been looking for sea-weeds, or throwing stones at one another on the shore." "Insidious prejudices like dirt and insects on the glass of a telescope will blur the view, and make them see strange monsters whers there are none." "Time is told by that pendulum, man,



which goes backwards and forwards in its progress." "The oracles will philippize as long as Philip is the master ; but still they have an inner meaning for Athenian ears."

These graceful touches serve wonderfully to relieve the dryness and monotony inseparable from a succession of wise counsels and arguments. Closely allied to this exercise of fancy, is the witty epigrammatical turn sometimes given to the author's reflections. The following extracts will illustrate this : "We move about in a mist and talk of phantoms as if they were living men." "The Courts of Reason recognise no difference of persons." "Infinite toil would not enable you to sweep away a mist &c." "You will have brought home to it feelings and opinions with which it cannot live." "It is their nature to prefer an open visible rent to a time-serving patch." "In punishing he should not consult his anger ; nor in remitting punishment, his ease" (a good instance of antithesis.) "There is no drilling of men's hearts." "Inflated by Folly, and blown about by Idleness."

In speaking of the graces of style which Helps uses sparingly but always with felicity, we should not omit all reference to the perfect taste—the undefinable elegance and gentlemanly tone—which characterises all his writings. That charity and consideration for the feelings and opinions of others which he preaches, he never fails to practise himself. There is not a single phrase or remark which might jar upon the most delicate ear. An adverse critic might indeed say that this fastidiousness is carried a little too far ; but strong disapprobation of everything insincere, unmanly, or in any way unbecoming a gentleman is by no means wanting ; there is no suggestion of compromise with what is really disgraceful. Nor does this avoidance of everything mean and offensive imply that the writer confines himself to the commonplace, or harmless platitudes. On the contrary, there are abundant proofs of the author's shrewdness of observation and insight into the workings of the human heart. This makes his neatly worded maxims and aphorisms (illustrated above) so effective, and gives to many of them a Baconian ring.

**ESSAYS**

**WRITTEN IN THE INTERVALS OF BUSINESS.**

**PART I.**

'And he that knows how little certainty there is in human discourses, and how *we know in part, and prophesie in part*, and that of everything whereof we know a little, we are ignorant in much more, must either be content with such proportion as the things will bear, or as himself can get, or else he must never seek to alter or to persuade any man to be of his opinion. For the greatest part of discourses that are in the whole world, is nothing but a heap of probable inducements, plausibilities, and witty entertainments; and the throng of notices is not unlike the accidents of a battel, in which every man tells a new tale, something that he saw, mingled with a great many things which he saw not; his eyes and his fear joining together equally in the instructions and the illusion, these make up the stories.'

JEREMY TAYLOR'S *Ductor Dubitantium*.

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## ON PRACTICAL WISDOM.

**P**RACTICAL wisdom acts in the mind, as gravitation does in the material world ; combining, keeping things in their places, and maintaining a mutual dependence amongst the various parts of our system. It is for ever reminding us where we are, and what we can do,—not in fancy, but in real life. It does not permit us to wait for dainty duties, pleasant to the imagination ; but insists upon our doing those which are before us. It is always inclined to make much of what it possesses and is not given to ponder over those schemes which might have been carried on, if what is irrevocable had been other than it is. It does not suffer us to waste our energies in regret. In journeying with it we go towards the sun, and the shadow of our burden falls behind us.

2. In bringing any thing to completion, the means which it looks for are not the shortest, nor the neatest, nor the best that can be imagined. They have however this advantage, that they happen to be within reach.

3. We are liable to make constant mistakes about the nature of practical wisdom, until we come to perceive that it consists, not in any one predominant faculty

or disposition, but rather in a certain harmony amongst all the faculties and affections of the man. Where this harmony exists, there are likely to be well chosen ends, and means judiciously adapted. But, as it is, we see numerous instances of men who, with great abilities, accomplish nothing ; and we are apt to vary our views of practical wisdom according to the particular failings of these men. Sometimes we think it consists in having a definite purpose and being constant to it. But take the case of a deeply selfish person ; he will be constant enough to his purpose and it will be a definite one. Very likely, too, it may not be founded upon unreasonable expectations. The object which he has in view may be a small thing ; but being as close to his eyes as to his heart, there will be times when he can see nothing above it or beyond it or beside it. And so he may fail in practical wisdom.

4. Sometimes it is supposed that practical wisdom is not likely to be found amongst imaginative persons ; and this is very true, if you mean by 'imaginative persons' those who have an excess of imagination. For, in the mind as in the body, general dwarfishness is often accompanied by a disproportionate size of some part. The large hands and feet of a dwarf seem to have devoured his stature. But if you mean that imagination, of itself, is something inconsistent with practical wisdom, I think you will find that your opinion is not founded on experience ; on the contrary, I believe that there have been few men who have done great things in the world, who have not had large power of imagination. For

imagination, if it be subject to reason, is 'its slave of the lamp.'

5. It is a common error to suppose that practical wisdom is something Epicurean in its nature, which makes no difficulties, takes things as they come; is desirous of getting rid rather than of completing, and which, in short, is never troublesome. And from a fancy of this kind many persons are considered speculative merely because they are of a searching nature, and are not satisfied with small expedients and such devices as serve to conceal the ills they cannot cure. And if to be practical is to do things in such a way as to leave a great deal for other people to undo at some future, and no very distant period,—then, certainly, these scrutinizing, painstaking sort of persons are not practical. For it is their nature to prefer a good open visible rent to a time-serving patch. I do not mean to say that they may not resort to patching as a means of delay. But they will not permit themselves to fancy that they have done a thing when they have only hit upon some expedient for putting off the doing.

6. Bacon says, 'In this theatre of man's life, God and angels only should be lookers-on; that contemplation and action ought ever to be united,—a conjunction like unto that of the two highest planets, Saturn the planet of rest, and Jupiter the planet of action.' It is in this conjunction, which seems to Bacon so desirable, that practical wisdom delights; and on that account it is supposed by some men to have a tinge of baseness in



it. They do not know that practical wisdom is as far from what they term expediency, as it is from impracticability itself. They see how much of compromise there is in all human affairs. At the same time, they do not perceive that this compromise—which should be the nice limit between wilfulness and a desertion of the light that is within us,—is the thing of all others which requires the diligent exercise of that uprightness which they fear to put in peril, and which they persuade themselves will be strengthened by inactivity. They fancy, too, that high moral resolves and great principles are not for daily use, and that there is no room for them in the affairs of this life. This is an extreme delusion. For how is the world ever made better? Not by mean little schemes which some men fondly call practical, not by setting one evil thing to counteract another ; but by the introduction of those principles of action, which are looked upon at first as theories, but which are at last acknowledged and acted upon as common truths. The men who first introduce these principles are practical men, though the practices which such principles create may not come into being in the life-time of their founders.

## AIDS TO CONTENTMENT.

**T**HE first object of this Essay is it to suggest some antidotes against the manifold ingenuity of self-tormenting.

2. For instance, how much fretting might be prevented by a thorough conviction that there can be no such thing as unmixed good in this world! In ignorance of this, how many a man, after having made a free choice in any matter, contrives to find innumerable causes for blaming his judgment! Blue and green having been the only colours put before him, he is dissatisfied with himself because he omitted to choose pure white. Shenstone has worked out the whole process with fidelity. 'We are oftentimes in suspense betwixt the choice of different pursuits. We choose one at last doubtingly, and with an unconquered hankering after the other. We find the scheme, which we have chosen, answer our expectations but indifferently—most worldly projects will. We, therefore, repent of our choice, and immediately fancy happiness in the paths which we decline; and this heightens our uneasiness. We might at least escape the aggravation of it. It is not improbable, we had been more unhappy, but extremely probable, we had not been less so, had we made a different decision.'

3. A great deal of discomfort arises from over-sensitiveness about what people may say of you, or your

actions. This requires to be blunted. Consider whether anything that you can do will have much connection with what they will say. And besides, it may be doubted whether they will say anything at all about you. Many unhappy persons seem to imagine that they are always in an amphitheatre with the assembled world as spectators ; whereas, all the while, they are playing to empty benches. They fancy, too, that they form the particular theme of every passer-by. If, however, they must listen to imaginary conversations about themselves, they might, at any rate, defy the proverb, and insist upon hearing themselves well spoken of.

4. Well, but suppose that it is no fancy ; and that you really are the object of unmerited obloquy. What then ? It has been well said, that in that case the abuse does not touch you ; that if you are guiltless, it ought not to hurt your feelings any more than if it were said of another person, with whom you are not even acquainted. You may answer that this false description of you is often believed in by those whose good opinion is of importance to your welfare. That certainly is a palpable injury ; and the best mode of bearing up against it is to endeavour to form some just estimate of its nature and extent. Measure it by the worldly harm which is done to you. Do not let your imagination conjure up all manner of apparitions of scorn and contempt, and universal hissing. It is partly your own fault if the calumny is believed in by those who ought to know you, and in whose affections you live. That should be a

circle with in which no poisoned dart can reach you. And for the rest,—for the injury done to you in the world's estimation,—it is simply a piece of ill-fortune, about which it is neither wise nor decorous to make much moaning.

5. A little thought will sometimes prevent you from being discontented at not meeting with the gratitude which you have expected. If you were only to measure your expectations of gratitude by the extent of benevolence which you have expended, you would seldom have occasion to call people ungrateful. But many persons are in the habit of giving such a factitious value to any services which they may render, that there is but little chance of their being contented with what they are likely to get in return,—which, however, may be quite as much as they deserve.

6. Besides, it is a common thing for people to expect from gratitude what affection alone can give.

7. There are many topics which may console you, when you are displeased at not being as much esteemed as you think you ought to be. You may begin by observing that people in general will not look about for any body's merits or admire anything which does not come in their way. You may consider how satirical would be any praise which should not be based upon a just appreciation of your merits : you may reflect how few of your fellow-creatures can have the opportunity of forming a just judgment about you : you may then go further, and think how few of these few are persons whose judgment would influence you deeply in other matters : and you

may conclude by imagining that such persons do estimate you fairly ; though perhaps you never hear it.

8. The heart of man seeks for sympathy, and each of us craves a recognition of his talents and his labours. But this craving is in danger of becoming morbid, unless it be constantly kept in check by calm reflection on its vanity, or by dwelling upon the very different and far higher motives which should actuate us. That man has fallen into a pitiable state of moral sickness, in whose eyes the good opinion of his fellowmen is the test of merit, and their applause the principal reward for exertion.

9. A habit of mistrust is the torment of some people. It taints their love and their friendship. They take up small causes of offence. They expect their friends to show the same aspect to them at all times ; which is more than human nature can do. They try experiments to ascertain whether they are sufficiently loved : they watch narrowly the effects of absence, and require their friends to prove to them that the intimacy is exactly upon the same footing as it was before. Some persons acquire these suspicious ways from a natural diffidence in themselves ; for which they are often loved the more : and they might find ample comfort in that, if they could but believe it. With others, these habits arise from a selfishness which cannot be satisfied. And their endeavours should be to uproot such a disposition, not to soothe it.

10. Contentment abides with truth. And you will generally suffer for wishing to appear other than what

you are ; whether it be richer, or greater, or more learned. The mask soon becomes an instrument of torture.

11. Fit objects to employ the intervals of life are among the greatest aids to contentment that a man can possess. The lives of many persons are an alternation of the one engrossing pursuit, and a sort of listless apathy. They are either grinding, or doing nothing. Now to those who are half their lives fiercely busy, the remaining half is often torpid without quiescence. A man should have some pursuits which may be always in his power, and to which he may turn gladly in his hours of recreation.

12. And if the intellect requires thus to be provided with perpetual objects, what must it be with the affections ? Depend upon it, the most fatal idleness is that of the heart. And the man who feels weary of life may be sure that he does not love his fellow-creatures as he ought.

13. You cannot hope for anything like contentment so long as you continue to attach that ridiculous degree of importance to the events of this life which so many people are inclined to do. Observe the effect which it has upon them : they are most uncomfortable if their little projects do not turn out according to their fancy ; nothing is to be angular to them—they regard external things as the only realities ; and as they have fixed their abode here, they must have it arranged to their mind. In all they undertake, they feel the anxiety of a gambler, and not the calmness of a labouring man. It is, how-

ever, the success or failure of their efforts, and not the motives for their endeavour, which gives them this concern. 'It will be all the same a hundred years hence.' So says the Epicurean as he saunters by. The Christian exhorts them to extend their hopes and their fears to the far future. But they are up to their lips in the present, though they taste it none the more for that. And so they go on, fretting, and contending; until an event, about which of all their anxieties they have felt the least anxious, sweeps them and their cobwebs away from the face of the earth.

14. I have no intention of putting forward specifics for real afflictions, or pretending to teach refined methods for avoiding grief. As long, however, as there is anything to be done in a matter, the time for grieving about it has not come. But when the subject for grief is fixed and inevitable, sorrow is to be borne like pain. It is only a paroxysm of either that can justify us in neglecting the duties which no bereavement can lessen, and which no sorrow can leave us without. And we may remember that sorrow is at once the lot, the trial, and the privilege of man.

15. Most of the aids to contentment above suggested are, comparatively, superficial ones; and though they may be serviceable, there is much in human nature that they cannot touch. Even pagans were wont to look for more potent remedies. They could not help seeking for some great idea to rest upon; something to still the throbbings of their souls; some primæval mys-



tery which should be answerable for the miseries of life, Such was their idea of Necessity, the source of such systems as the Stoic and the Epicurean. Christianity rests upon very different foundations. And surely a Christian's reliance on divine goodness, and his full belief in another world, should console him under serious affliction, and bear the severer test of supporting him against that under-current of vexations which is not wanting in the smoothest lives.

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## ON SELF-DISCIPLINE.

**T**HERE is always some danger of self-discipline leading to a state of self-confidence ; and the more so, when the motives for it are of a poor and worldly character, or the results of it outward only, and superficial. But surely when a man has got the better of any bad habit or evil disposition, his sensation should not be those of exultation only. Ought they not rather to be akin to the shuddering faintness with which he would survey a chasm that he had been guided to avoid, or with which he would recall to mind a dubious deadly struggle which had terminated in his favour? The sense of danger is never, perhaps, so fully apprehended as when the danger has been overcome.

2. Self-discipline is grounded on self-knowledge. A man may be led to resolve upon some general course of self-discipline by a faint glimpse of his moral degradation : let him not be contented with that small insight. His first step in self-discipline should be to attempt to have something like an adequate idea of the extent of the disorder. The deeper he goes in this matter the better : he must try to probe his own nature

thoroughly. Men often make use of what self-knowledge they may possess to frame for themselves skilful flattery, or to amuse themselves in fancying what such persons as they are would do under various imaginary circumstances. For flatteries and for fancies of this kind, not much depth of self-knowledge is required : but he who wants to understand his own nature for the purposes of self-discipline, must strive to learn the whole truth about himself, and not shrink from telling it to his own soul :—

To thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

The old courtier Polonius meant this for worldly wisdom : but it may be construed much more deeply.

3. Imagine the soul, then, thoroughly awake to its state of danger, and the whole energies of the man devoted to self-improvement. At this point, there often arises a habit of introspection which is too limited in its nature : we scrutinize each action as if it were a thing by itself, independent and self-originating ; and so our scrutiny does less good, perhaps, than might be expected from the pain it gives, and the resolution it requires. Any truthful examination into our actions must be good ; but we ought not to be satisfied with it, until it becomes both searching and progressive. Its aim should be not only to investigate instances, but to discover principles. Thus,—suppose that our conscience upbraids us for any particular bad habit : we then regard each

instance of it with intense self-reproach, and long for an opportunity of proving the amendment which seems certain to arise from our pangs of regret. The trial comes ; and sometimes our former remorse is remembered, and saves us ; and sometimes it is forgotten, and our conduct is as bad as it was before our conscience was awakened. Now in such a case we should begin at the beginning, and strive to discover where it is that we are wrong in the heart. This is not to be done by weighing each particular instance, and observing after what interval it occurred, and whether with a little more or a little less temptation than usual ; instead of dwelling chiefly on mere circumstances of this kind, we should try and get at the substance of the thing, so as to ascertain what fundamental precept of God is violated by the habit in question. That precept we should make our study ; and then there is more hope of a permanent amendment.

4. Infinite toil would not enable you to sweep away a mist ; but, by ascending a little, you may often look over it altogether. So it is with our moral improvement : we wrestle fiercely with a vicious habit, which would have no hold upon us if we ascended into a higher moral atmosphere.

5. As I have heard suggested, it is by adding to our good purposes, and nourishing the affections which are rightly placed, that we shall best be able to combat the bad ones. By adopting such a course you will not have yielded to your enemy, but will have gone, in all humility, to form new alliances : you will then resist an evil

habit with the strength which you have gained in carrying out a good one. You will find, too, that when you set your heart upon the things that are worthy of it, the small selfish ends, which used to be so dear to it, will appear almost disgusting ; you will wonder that they could have had such hold upon you.

6. In the same way, if you extend and deepen your sympathies, the prejudices which have hitherto clung obstinately to you will fall away, your former uncharitableness will seem absolutely distasteful : you will have brought home to it feelings and opinions with which it cannot live.

7. Man, a creature of twofold nature, body and soul, should have both parts of that nature engaged in any matter in which he is concerned : spirit and form must both enter into it. It is idol-worship to substitute the form for the spirit : but it is a vain philosophy which seeks to dispense with the form. All this applies to self-discipline.

8. See how most persons love to connect some outward circumstance with their good resolutions ! They resolve on commencing the new year with a surrender of this bad habit : they will alter their conduct as soon as they are at such a place. The mind thus shows its feebleness ; but we must not conclude that the support it naturally seeks is useless. At the same time that we are to turn our chief attention to the attainment of right principles, we cannot safely neglect any assistance which may strengthen us in contending against bad habits ; far

is it from the spirit of true humility to look down upon such assistance. Who would not be glad to have the ring of Eastern story, which should remind the wearer, by its change of colour, of his want of shame? Still these auxiliaries partake of a mechanical nature: we must not expect more from them than they can give: they may serve as aids to memory; they may form landmarks, as it were, of our progress; but they cannot, of themselves, maintain that progress.

9. It is in a similar spirit that we should treat what may be called prudential considerations. We may listen to the suggestions of prudence, and find them an aid to self-discipline; but we should never rest upon them. While we do not fail to make the due use of them, we must never forget that they do not go to the root of the matter. Prudence may enable a man to conquer the world, but not to rule his own heart: it may change one evil passion for another; but it is not a thing of potency enough to make a man change his nature.

10. Prayer is a constant source of invigoration to self-discipline: not the thoughtless praying, which is a thing of custom; but that which is sincere, intense, watchful. \* Let a man ask himself whether he really would have the thing he prays for: let him think while he is praying for a spirit of forgiveness, whether even at that moment he is disposed to give up the luxury of anger. If not, what a horrible mockery it is! To think that a man can find nothing better to do, in the presence

of his Creator, than telling off so many words : alone with his God, and repeating his task like a child, —longing to get rid of it, and indifferent to its meaning !

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## ON OUR JUDGMENTS OF OTHER MEN.

**I**N forming these lightly, we wrong ourselves, and those whom we judge. In scattering such things abroad, we endow our unjust thoughts with a life which we cannot take away, and become false witnesses to pervert the judgments of the world in general. Who does not feel, that to describe with fidelity the least portion of the entangled nature that is within him would be no easy matter? And yet the same man who feels this, and who, perhaps, would be ashamed of talking at hazard about the properties of a flower, of a weed, of some figure in geometry, will put forth his guesses about the character of his brother-man, as if he had the fullest authority for all that he was saying.

2. But perhaps we are not wont to make such rash remarks ourselves: we are only pleased to receive them with the most obliging credence from the lips of any person we may chance to meet with. Such credulity is anything but blameless. We cannot think so seriously of the danger of taking upon trust these off-hand sayings, and of the positive guilt of uttering them as if they were our own, or had been assayed by our observa-

tion. How much we should be ashamed, if we knew the slight grounds of some of those uncharitable judgments, to which we lend the influence of our name by repeating them! And even if we repeat such things only as we have good reason to believe in, we should still be in no hurry to put them forward, especially if they are sentences of condemnation. There is a maxim of this kind which Thomas à Kempis, in his chapter 'De prudentiâ in agendis,' has given with all the force of expression that it merits. 'Ad hanc etiam pertinet, non quibuslibet hominum verbis credere; *nec audita vel credita, mox ad aliorum aures effundere.*'

3. There are certain things quite upon the surface of a man's character: there are certain obvious facts in any man's conduct: and there are persons who, being very much before the world, offer plenty of materials for judging about them. Such circumstances as these may fairly induce you to place credence in a general opinion, which, however, you have no means of verifying in any way for yourself: but in no case should you suffer yourself to be carried away at once by the current sayings about men's characters and conduct. If you do, you are helping to form a mob. Consider what these sayings are: how seldom they embody the character discussed; or go far to exhaust the question, if it is one of conduct. It is well if they describe a part with faithfulness, or give indications from which a shrewd and impartial thinker may deduce some true conclusions. Again, these sayings may be true in themselves, but the pro-



minence given to them may lead to very false impressions. Besides, how many of them must be formed upon the opinion of a few persons, and those, perhaps forward thinkers.

4. You feel that you yourself would be liable to make mistakes of all kinds if you had to form an independent judgment in the matter: do not too readily suppose that the general opinions you hear are free from such mistakes, merely because they are made, or appear to you to be made, by a great many people.

5. If we come to analyse the various opinions we hear of men's character and conduct, there must be many which are formed wrongly, though sincerely, either from imperfect information, or erroneous reasoning. There will be others which are the simple result of the prejudices and passions of the persons judging of their humours, and sometimes even of their ingenuity. There will be others grounded on total misrepresentations which arise from imperfect hearing, or from some entire mistake, or from a report being made by a person who understood so little of the matter that it was not possible for him to convey, with anything like accuracy, what he heard about it. Then there are the careless things which are said in general conversation, but which often have as much apparent weight as if they had been well considered. Sometimes these various causes are combined; and the result is, that an opinion of some man's character and conduct gets abroad which is formed after a wrong method, by prejudiced persons, upon a false

statement of facts, respecting a matter which they cannot possibly understand ; and this is then left to be inflated by Folly, and blown about by Idleness.

6. There is an excellent passage in Wollaston's *Religion of Nature* upon this subject, where he says, 'The good or bad repute of men depends in a great measure upon mean people who carry their stories from family to family, and propagate them very fast : like little insects, which lay apace, and the less the faster. There are few, very few, who have the opportunity and the will and *the ability to represent things truly*. Beside the matters of fact themselves, there are many circumstances which, before sentence is passed, ought to be known and weighed, and yet scarce ever can be known, but to the person himself who is concerned. He may have other views, and another sense of things, than his judges have : and what he understands, what he feels, what he intends, may be a secret confined to his own breast. Or perhaps the censurer, notwithstanding this kind of men talk as if they were infallible, may be mistaken himself in his opinion, and judge that to be wrong which in truth is right.'

7. Few people have imagination enough to enter into the delusions of others, or indeed to look at the actions of any other person with any prejudices but their own. Perhaps, however, it would be nearer the truth to say that few people are in the habit of employing their imagination in the service of charity. Most persons require its magic aid to gild their castles in the air ; to

conduct them along those fancied triumphal processions in which they themselves play so conspicuous a part ; to conquer enemies for them without battles, and to make them virtuous without effort. This is what they want their imagination for ; they cannot spare it for any little errand of charity. And sometimes when men do think charitably, they are afraid to speak out, for fear of being considered stupid, or credulous.

8. We have been considering the danger of adopting current sayings about men's character and conduct : but suppose we consider, in detail, the difficulty of forming an original opinion on these matters ; especially if we have not a personal knowledge of the men of whom we speak. In the first place, we seldom know with sufficient exactness the facts upon which we judge ; and a little thing may make a great difference when we come to investigate motives. But the report of a transaction sometimes represents the real facts no better than the laboured variation does the simple air ; which, amidst so many shakes and flourishes, might not be recognized even by the person who composed it. Then, again, how can we ensure that we rightly interpret those actions which we exactly know ? Perhaps one of the first motives that we look for is self-interest, when we want to explain an action ; but we have scarcely ever such a knowledge of the nature and fortunes of another, as to be able to decide what is his interest, much less what it may appear to him to be : besides, a man's fancies, his envy, his wilfulness, everyday interfere with, and override his interests. He

will know this himself, and will often try to conceal it by inventing motives of self-interest to account for his doing what he has a mind to do.

9. It is well to be thoroughly impressed with a sense of the difficulty of judging about others ; still, judge we must and sometimes very hastily ; the purposes of life require it. We have, however, more and better materials, sometimes, than we are aware of : we must not imagine that they are always deep-seated and recondite : they often lie upon the surface. Indeed, the primary character of a man is especially discernible in trifles : for then he acts, as it were, almost unconsciously. It is upon the method of observing and testing these things, that a just knowledge of individual men in great measure depends. You may learn more of a person even by a little converse with him, than by a faithful outline of his history. The most important of his actions may be anything but the most significant of the man ; for they are likely to be the results of many things besides his nature. To understand that, I doubt whether you might not learn more from a good portrait of him, than from two or three of the most prominent actions of his life. Indeed if men did not express much of their nature in their manners, appearance, and general bearing, we should be at a sad loss to make up our minds how to deal with each other.

10. In judging of others, it is important to distinguish those parts of their character and intellect which are easily discernible from those which require much observation. In the intellect, we soon perceive whether

a man has wit, acuteness, or logical power. It is not easy to discover whether he has judgment. And it requires some study of the man to ascertain whether he has practical wisdom ; which, indeed, is a result of high moral, as well as intellectual, qualities.

11. In the moral nature, we soon detect selfishness, egotism, and exaggeration. Carelessness about truth is soon found out ; you see it in a thousand little things. On the other hand, it is very difficult to come to a right conclusion about a man's temper, until you have seen a great deal of him. Of his tastes, some will lie on the surface, others not ; for there is a certain reserve about most people in speaking of the things they like best. Again, it is always a hard matter to understand any man's feelings. Nations differ in their modes of expressing feelings, and how much more individual men !

12. There are certain cases in which we are peculiarly liable to err in our judgments of others. Thus, I think, we are all disposed to dislike, in a manner disproportionate to their demerits, those who offend us by pretension of any kind. We are apt to fancy that they despise us ; whereas, all the while, perhaps, they are only courting our admiration. There are people who wear the worst part of their characters outwards : they offend our vanity ; they rouse our fears ; and under these influences we omit to consider how often a scornful man is tender-hearted, and an assuming man, one who longs to be popular and to please.

13. Then there are characters of such a different

kind from our own, that we are without the means of measuring and appreciating them. A man who has no humour, how difficult for him to understand one who has !

14. But of all the errors in judging of others, some of the worst are made in judging of those who are nearest to us. They think that we have entirely made up our minds about them, and are apt to show us that sort of behaviour only which they know we expect. Perhaps, too, they fear us, or they are convinced that we do not and cannot sympathize with them. And so we move about in a mist, and talk of phantoms as if they were living men, and think that we understand those who never interchange any discourse with us, but the talk of the market-place ; or if they do, it is only as players—who are playing a part, set down in certain words, to be eked out with the stage gestures for each affection,—who would deem themselves little else than mad if they were to say out to us anything of their own.

## ON THE EXERCISE OF BENEVOLENCE.

**W**ITH the most engaging objects of benevolence around them, men consume the largest part of their existence in the acquisition of money, or of knowledge ; or in sighing for the opportunities of advancement ; or in doting over some unavailing sorrow. Or, as it often happens, they are outwardly engaged in slaving over the forms and follies of the world, while their minds are given up to dreams of vanity ; or to long-drawn reveries, a mere indulgence of their fancy. And yet hard by them are groans, and horrors, and sufferings of all kinds, which seem to penetrate no deeper than their senses.

2. Let them think what boundless occupations there are before us all ! Consider the masses of human beings in our manufacturing towns and crowded cities, left to their own devices—the destitute peasantry of our sister-land—the horrors of slavery where it exists—the general aspect of the common people—the pervading want of education—the fallacies and falsehoods which are left, unchecked, to accomplish all the mischief that is in them — the many legal and executive reforms not likely to meet with much popular impulse, and requiring, on that ac-



count, the more diligence from those who have any insight into such matters. By employing himself upon any one of the above subjects a man is likely to do some good. If he only ascertains what has been done, and what is doing, in any of these matters, he may be of great service. A man of real information becomes a centre of opinion, and therefore of action.

3. Many a man will say :—‘This is all very true : there certainly is a great deal of good to be done. Indeed, one is perplexed what to choose as one’s point of action ; and still more how to begin upon it.’ To which I would answer :—Is there no one service for the great family of man which has yet interested you ? Is no work of benevolence brought near to you by the peculiar circumstance of your life ? If there is, follow it at once. If not, still you must not wait for something apposite to occur. Take up any subject relating to the welfare of mankind,—the first that comes to hand : read about it : think about it : trace it in the world, and see if it will not come to your heart. How listlessly the eye glances over the map of a country upon which we have never set foot ! On the other hand, with what satisfaction we contemplate the mere outline only of a land we have once travelled over ! Think earnestly upon any subject, investigate it sincerely, and you are sure to love it. You will not complain again of not knowing whither to direct your attention. There have been enthusiasts about heraldry. Many have devoted themselves to chess. Is the welfare of living,



thinking, suffering, eternal creatures, less interesting than 'argent' and 'azure,' or than the knight's move, and the progress of a pawn?

4. There are many persons, doubtless, who feel the wants and miseries of their fellow-men tenderly if not deeply; but this feeling is not of the kind to induce them to exert themselves out of their own small circle. They have little faith in their individual exertions doing aught towards a remedy for any of the great disorders of the world. If an evil of magnitude forces itself upon their attention, they take shelter in a comfortable sort of belief that the course of events, or the gradual enlightenment of mankind, or, at any rate, something which is too large for them to have any concern in, will set it right. In short, they are content to remain spectators: or, at best, to wait until an occasion shall arrive when their benevolence may act at once, with as little preparation of means, as if it were something magical.

5. But opportunities of doing good, though abundant and obvious enough, are not exactly fitted to our hands: we must be alert in preparing ourselves for them. Benevolence requires method and activity in its exercise. It is by no means the same sort of thing as the indolent good humour with which a well-fed man, reclining on a sunny bank, looks upon the working world around him.

6. As to the notion of waiting for the power to do good, it is one that we must never listen to. Surely the exercise of a man's benevolence is not to depend upon his worldly good fortune! Every man has to-day the power

of laying some foundation for doing good, if not of doing it. And whoever does not exert himself until he has a large power of carrying out his good intentions, may be sure that he will not make the most of the opportunity when it comes. It is not in the heat of action ; nor when a man, from his position, is likely to be looked up to with some reverence ; that he should have to begin his search for facts or principles. He should then come forth to apply results ; nor to work them out painfully, and perhaps precipitately, before the eyes of the world.

7. The wordly-wise may ask, :—‘Will not these benevolent pursuits prevent a man from following with sufficient force (what they call) his legitimate occupations ?’ I do not see why. Surely Providence has not made our livelihood such an all-absorbing affair, that it does not leave us room or time for our benevolence to work in. However, if a man will only give up that portion of his thinking time which he spends upon vain-glory,—upon imagining, for instance, what other people are thinking about him,—he will have time and energy enough to pursue a very laborious system of benevolence.

8. I do not mean to contend that active benevolence may not hinder a man’s advancement in the world : for advancement greatly depends upon a reputation for excellence in some one thing of which the world perceives that it has present need : and an obvious attention to other things, though perhaps not incompatible with the excellence itself, may easily prevent a person from obtain-

ing a reputation for it. But any deprivation of this kind would be readily endured if we only took the view of our social relations which Christianity opens to us. We should then see that benevolence is not a thing to be taken up by chance, and put by at once to make way for every employment which savours of self-interest. Benevolence is the largest part of our business, beginning with our home duties, and extending itself to the utmost verge of humanity. A vague feeling of kindness towards our fellow creatures is no state of mind to rest in. It is not enough for us to be able to say that nothing of human interest is alien to us, and that we give our acquiescence, or indeed our transient assistance, to any scheme of benevolence, that may come in our way. No: in promoting the welfare of others we must toil; we must devote to it earnest thought, constant care, and zealous endeavour. What is more, we must do all this with patience; and be ready, in the same cause, to make an habitual sacrifice of our own tastes and wishes. Nothing short of this is the visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, which our creed requires of us.

9. Kindness to animals is no unworthy exercise of benevolence. We hold that the life of brutes perishes with their breath, and that they are never to be clothed again with consciousness. The inevitable shortness then of their existence should plead for them touchingly. The insects on the surface of the water, poor ephemeral things, who would needlessly abridge their dancing pleasure of to-day? Such feelings we should have towards

the whole animate creation. To those animals, over which we are masters for however short a time, we have positive duties to perform. This seems too obvious to be insisted upon; but there are persons who act as though they thought they could buy the right of ill-treating any of God's creature.

10. We should never in any way consent to the ill-treatment of animals, because the fear of ridicule, or some other fear, prevents our interfering. As to there being anything really trifling in any act of humanity, however slight, it is moral blindness to suppose so. The few moments in the course of each day which a man absorbed in some worldly pursuit may carelessly expend in kind words or trifling charities to those around him, and kindness to an animal is one of these, are perhaps, in the sight of Heaven, the only time that he has lived to any purpose worthy of recording.

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## DOMESTIC RULE.

**T**ACITUS says of Agricola, that 'he governed his family, which many find to be a harder task than to govern a province.' And the worst of this difficulty is, that its existence is frequently unperceived, until it comes to be pressingly felt.

2. For, either a man thinks that he must needs understand those whom he sees daily, and also, perhaps, that it is no great matter whether he understand them or not, if he is resolved to do his duty by them : or he believes that in domestic rule there is much licence, and that each occasion is to be dealt with by some law made at the time, or after : or he imagines that any domestic matter which he may leave to-day omitted or ill-done can be repaired at his leisure, when the concerns of the outer world are not so pressing as they are at present.

3. But each day brings its own duties, and carries them along with it ; and they are as waves broken on the shore,—many like them coming after but none ever the same. And amongst all his duties, as there are none in which a man acts more by himself and can do more harm with less outcry from the world, so there are

none requiring more forethought and watchfulness than those which arise from his domestic relations. Nor can there be a reasonable hope of his fulfilling those duties while he is ignorant of the feelings, (however familiar he may be with the countenances,) of those around him.

4. The extent and power of domestic rule are very great: but this is often overlooked by the persons who possess it; and they are rather apt to underrate the influence of their own authority. They can hardly imagine how strongly it is felt by others, unless they see it expressed in something outward. The effects of this mistake are often increased by another, which comes into operation when men are dealing with their inferiors in rank and education: in which case, they are rather apt to fancy that the natural sense of propriety, which would put the right limit to familiar intercourse, belongs only to the well-educated or the well-born. And from either of these causes, or both united, they are led, perhaps, to add to their authority by a harshness not their own,—rather than to impair it, as they fancy, by that degree of freedom which they must allow to those around them, if they would enter into their feelings and understand their dispositions. Perhaps there are some persons who think that they can manage very well without this familiar intercourse: and certainly there is but little occasion for knowing much about the nature of those whom you intend only to *restrain*. Coercion however, is but a small part of government.

5. We should always be most anxious to avoid pro-

voking the rebel spirit of the will in those who are entrusted to our guidance : we should not attempt to tie them up to their duties, like galley-slaves to their labour. We should be very careful that, in our anxiety to get the outward part of an action performed to our mind, we do not destroy that germ of spontaneousness which could alone give any significance to the action. God has allowed free will to man, for the choice of good or evil ; and is it likely that it is left to us to make our fellow-creatures virtuous by word of command ? We may insist upon a routine of proprieties being performed with soldier-like precision ; but there is no drilling of men's hearts.

6. It is a great thing to maintain the just limits of domestic authority, and to place it upon its right foundation. You cannot make reason conform to it. It may be fair to insist upon a certain thing being done, but not that others should agree with you in saying that it is the best thing that could have been done ; for there cannot be a shorter way of making them hypocritical. Your submitting the matter at all to their judgments may be gratuitous ; but if you do so, you must remember that the Courts of Reason recognize no difference of persons. Your wishes may fairly outweigh their arguments ; but this of course is foreign to the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the thing itself, considered independently.

7. Domestic Rule is founded upon truth, and love. If it has not both of these, it is nothing better than a despotism.

8. It requires the perpetual exercise of love in its



most extended form. You have to learn the dispositions of those under you, and to teach them to understand yours. In order to do this, you must sympathize with them and convince them of your doing so ; for upon your sympathy will often depend their truthfulness. Thus, you must persuade a child to place confidence in you, if you wish to form an open upright character. You cannot terrify it into habits of truth. On the contrary, are not its earliest falsehoods caused by fear, much oftener than from wish to obtain any of its little ends by deceit? How often the complaint is heard from those in domestic authority, that they are not confided in ! But they forget how hard it is for an inferior to confide in a superior, and that he will scarcely venture to do so without the hope of some sympathy on the part of the latter ; and the more so, as half our confidences are about our follies, or what we deem such.

9. Every one who has paid the slightest attention to this subject knows that domestic rule is built upon justice, and therefore upon truth ; but it may not have been observed what evils will arise from even a slight deviation into conventionality. For instance, there is a common expression about ‘overlooking trifles.’ But what many persons should say, when they use this expression, is,—that they affect not to observe something, when there is no reason why they should not openly recognize it. Thus they contrive to make matter of offence out of things which really have no harm in them. Or the expression means that they do not care to take



notice of something which they really believe to be wrong ; and as it is not of much present annoyance to them, they persuade themselves that it is not much harm to those who practise it. In either case, it is their duty to look boldly at the matter. The greater quantity of truth and distinctness you can throw into your proceedings, the better. Connivance creates uncertainty, and gives an example of slyness ; and very often you will find that you connive at some practice, merely because you have not made up your mind whether it is right or wrong, and you wish to spare yourself the trouble of thinking. All this is falsehood.

10. Whatever you allow in the way of pleasure or of liberty, to those under your control, you should do it heartily ; you should recognize it entirely, encourage it, and enter into it. If, on the contrary, you do not care for their pleasures, or sympathize with their happiness, how can you expect to obtain their confidence ? And when you tell them that you consult their welfare, they look upon it as some abstract idea of your own. They will doubt whether you can know what is best for them, if they have good reason for thinking that you are likely to leave their particular views of happiness entirely out of the account.

11. We come next to consider some of the various means which may be made use<sup>n</sup> of in Domestic Rule.

(i) 12. Of course it is obvious that his own example must be the chief means in any man's power, by which

he can illustrate and enforce those duties which he seeks to impress upon his household.

13. Next to this, praise and blame are among the strongest means which he possesses ; and they should not depend upon his humour. He should not throw a bit of praise at his dependents by way of making up for a previous display of anger, not warranted by the occasion.

14. Ridicule is in general to be avoided ; not that it is inefficient, perhaps, for the present purpose ; but because it tends to make a poor and world-fearing character. ~~It is too strong a remedy:~~ and can seldom be applied with such just precision as to neutralize the evil aimed at, without destroying, at the same time, something that is good.

15. Still less should it ever appear that ridicule is directed against that which is good in itself, or which may be the beginning of goodness. There is perhaps more gentleness required in dealing with the infant virtues, than even with the vices, of those under our guidance. We should be very kind to any attempt at amendment. An idle sneer, or a look of incredulity, has been the death of many a good resolve. We should also be very cautious in reminding those who now would fain be wiser, of their rash sayings of evil, of their early and uncharitable judgments of others ; otherwise we run a great risk of hardening them in evil. This is especially to be guarded against with the young ; for never having felt the mutability of all human things, nor having lived long enough to discover

that his former certainties are among the strangest things which a man looks back upon in the vista of the past : not perceiving that time is told by that pendulum, man, which goes backwards and forwards in its progress ; nor dreaming that the way to some opinions may lie through their opposites ; they are mightily ashamed of inconsistency and may be made to look upon reparation as a crime.

16. The following are some general maxims which may be of service to any one in domestic authority.

17. The first is to make as few crimes as he can : and not to lay down those rules of practice, which, from a careful observation of their consequences, he has ascertained to be salutary, as if they were so many innate truths which all persons alike must at once, and fully, comprehend.

18. Let him not attempt to regulate other people's pleasures by his own tastes.

19. In commanding, it will not always be superfluous for him to reflect whether the thing commanded is possible.

20. In punishing, he should not consult his anger ; nor in remitting punishment, his ease.

21. Let him consider whether any part of what he is inclined to call disobedience, may have resulted from an insufficient expression of his own wishes.

22. He should be inclined to trust largely.

## ADVICE.

**A**DVICE is sure of a hearing when it coincides with our previous conclusions, and therefore comes in the shape of praise, or of encouragement. It is not unwelcome when we derive it for ourselves, by applying the moral of some other person's life to our own, though the points of resemblance which bring it home may be far from flattering, and the advice itself far from palatable. We can even endure its being addressed to us by another, when it is interwoven with regret at some error, not of ours, but of his ; and when we see that he throws in a little advice to us, by way of introducing, with more grace, a full recital of his own misfortunes.

2. But in general it is with advice as with taxation ; we can endure very little of either, if they come to us in the direct way. They must not thrust themselves upon us. We do not understand their knocking at our doors ; besides, they always choose such inconvenient times, and are for ever talking of arrears.

3. There is a wide difference between the advice which is thrust upon you, and that which you have to seek

for ; the general carelessness of the one, and the caution of other, are to be taken into account. In sifting the latter you must take care to separate the decorous part of it. I mean all that which the adviser puts in, because he thinks the world would expect it from a person of his character and station—all that which was to sound well to a third party, of whom, perhaps, the adviser stands somewhat in awe. You cannot expect him to neglect his own safety. The oracles will Philippize, as long as Philip is the master : but still they have inner meaning for Athenian ears.

4. It is a disingenuous thing to ask for advice, when you mean assistance : and it will be a just punishment if you get that which you pretended to want. There is a still greater insincerity in affecting to care about another's advice, when you lay the circumstances before him, only for the chance of his sanctioning a course which you had previously resolved on. This practice is noticed by Rochefoucauld, who has also laid bare the falseness of those givers of advice who have hardly heard to the end of your story, before they have begun to think how they can advise upon it to their own interest, or their own renown.

5. It is a maxim of prudence that when you advise a man to do something which is for your own interest as well as for his, you should put your own motive for advising him, full in view, with all the weight that belongs to it. If you conceal the interest which you have in the matter, and he should afterwards discover it, he will be

resolutely deaf even to that part of the argument which fairly does concern himself. If the lame man had endeavoured to persuade his blind friend that it was pure charity which induced him to lend the use of his eyes, you may be certain that he never would have been carried home, though it was the other's interest to carry him.

6. To get extended views, you should consult with persons who differ from you in disposition, circumstances, and modes of thought. At the same time, the most practicable advice may often be obtained from those who are of a similar nature to yourself, or who understand you so thoroughly that they are sure to make their advice personal. This advice will contain sympathy; for as it has been said, a man always sympathizes to a certain extent with what he understands. It will not, perhaps, be the soundest advice than can be given in the abstract, but it may be that which you can best profit by; for you may be able to act up to it with some consistency. This applies more particularly when the advice is wanted for some matter which is not of a temporary nature, and where a course of action will have to be adopted. It is observed in the *The Statesman* with much truth, 'Nothing can be for a man's interest in the long run, which is not founded on his character.' •

7. For similar reasons, when you have to give advice, you should never forget whom you are addressing, and what is practicable for him. You should not look

about for the wisest thing which can be said, but for that which your friend has the heart to undertake, and the ability to accomplish. You must sometimes feel with him, before you can possibly think for him. There is more need of keeping this in mind, the greater you know the difference to be between your friend's nature and your own. Your advice should not degenerate into comparisons between what would have been your conduct, and what was your friend's. You should be able to take the matter up at the point at which it is brought to you. It is very well to go back, and to show him what might, or what ought to have been done, if it throws any light upon what is to be done ; or if you have any other good purpose in such conversation. But remember that comment, however judicious, is not advice ; and that advice should always tend to something practicable.

8. The advice which we have been just speaking of, is of that kind which relates to points of *conduct*. If you want to change a man's *principles*, you may have to take him out of himself, as it were ; to show him fully the intense difference between your own views and his, and to trace up that difference to its source. Your object is not to make him do the best with what he has, but to induce him to throw something away altogether.

9. There are occasions on which a man feels that he has so fully made up his mind that hardly anything could move him ; and at the same time, he knows that he shall meet with much blame from those whose good



opinion is of value to him, if he acts according to that mind. Let him not think to break his fall by asking their advice beforehand. As it is, they will be severe upon him for not having consulted them ; but they will be outrageous, if after having consulted them, he then acts in direct opposition to their counsel. Besides, they will not be so inclined to parade the fact of their not having been consulted, as they would of their having given judicious advice which was unhappily neglected. I am not speaking of those instances in which a man is bound to consult others, but of such as constantly occur, where his consulting them is a thing which may be expected, but is not due.

10. In seeking for a friend to advise you, look for uprightness in him, rather than for ingenuity. It frequently happens that all you want is moral strength. You can discern consequences well enough, but cannot make up your mind to bear them. Let your Mentor also be a person of nice conscience ; for such a one is less likely to fall into that error to which we are all so liable, of advising our friends to act with less forbearance, and with less generosity, than we should be inclined to show ourselves, if the case were our own. 'If I were you' is a phrase often on our lips ; but we take good care not to disturb our identity, not to quit the disengaged position of a bystander. We recommend the course we might pursue if we were acting for you in your absence, but such as you never ought to undertake in your own behalf.



11. Besides being careful for your own sake about the persons whom you go to for advice, you should be careful also for theirs. It is an act of selfishness unnecessarily to consult those who are likely to feel a peculiar difficulty or delicacy in being your advisers, and who, perhaps, had better not be informed at all about the matter.

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## SECRECY.

**F**OR once that secrecy is formally imposed upon you, it is implied a hundred times by the concurrent circumstances. All that your friend says to you, as to his friend, is entrusted to you only. Much of what a man tells you in the hour of affliction, in sudden anger, or in any outpouring of his heart, should be sacred. In his craving for sympathy, he has spoken to you as to his own soul.

2. To repeat what you have heard in social intercourse is sometimes a sad treachery ; and when it is not treacherous, it is often foolish. For you commonly relate but a part of what has happened ; and even if you are able to relate that part with fairness, it is still as likely to be misconstrued as a word of many meanings, in a foreign tongue, without the context.

3. There are few conversations which do not imply some degree of mutual confidence, however slight. And in addition to that which is said in confidence there is generally something which is peculiar, though not confidential ; which is addressed to the present company alone, though not confided to their secrecy. It is meant for them, or for persons like them, and they are expected to understand it rightly. So that when a man has no scruple in repeating all that he hears to

anybody that he meets, he pays but a poor compliment to himself ; for he seems to take it for granted that what was said in his presence, would have been said, in the same words, at any time, aloud, and in the market-place. In short, that he is the average man of mankind : which I doubt much whether any man would like to consider himself.

4. On the other hand, there is an habitual and unmeaning reserve in some men, which makes secrets without any occasion ; and it is the least to say of such things that they are needless. Sometimes it proceeds from an innate shyness or timidity of disposition ; sometimes from a temper naturally suspicious ; or it may be the result of having been frequently betrayed or oppressed. From whatever cause it comes, it is a failing. As cunning is some men's strength, so this sort of reserve is some men's prudence. The man who does not know when, or how much, or to whom to confide, will do well in maintaining a Pythagorean silence. It is his best course. I would not have him change it on any account ; I only wish him not to mistake it for wisdom.

5. That happy union of frankness and reserve which is to be desired, comes not by studying rules, either for candour or for caution. It results chiefly from an uprightness of purpose enlightened by a profound and delicate care for the feelings of others. This will go very far in teaching us what to confide, and what to conceal, in our own affairs ; what to repeat, and what to suppress,

in those of other people. The stone in which nothing is seen, and the polished metal which reflects all things, are both alike hard and insensible.

6. When a matter is made public, to proclaim that it had ever been confided to your secrecy may be no trifling breach of confidence : and it is the only one which is then left for you to commit.

7. With respect to the kind of people to be trusted, it may be observed that grave proud men are very safe confidants : and that those persons, who have ever had to conduct any business in which secrecy was essential, are likely to acquire a habit of reserve for all occasions.

8. On the other hand, it is a question whether a secret will escape sooner by means of a vain man, or a simpleton. There are some people who play with a secret until at last it is suggested by their manner to some shrewd person who knows a little of the circumstances connected with it. There are others whom it is unsafe to trust : not that they are vain, and so wear the secret as an ornament ; not that they are foolish, and so let it drop by accident ; not that they are treacherous, and sell it for their own advantage. But they are simple-minded people, with whom the world has gone smoothly, who would not themselves make any mischief of the secret which they disclose, and therefore do not see what harm can come of telling it.

9. Before you make any confidence, you should consider whether the thing you wish to confide is of weight enough to be a secret. Your small secrets require the

greatest care. Most persons suppose that they have kept them sufficiently when they have been silent about them for a certain time ; and this is hardly to be wondered at, if there is nothing in their nature to remind a person that they were told to him as secrets.

10. There is sometimes a good reason for using concealment even with your dearest friends. It is that you may be less liable to be reminded of your anxieties when you have resolved to put them aside. Few persons have tact enough to perceive when to be silent, and when to offer you counsel or condolence.

11. You should be careful not to entrust another unnecessarily with a secret which it may be a hard matter for him to keep, and which may expose him to somebody's displeasure, when it is hereafter discovered that he was the object of your confidence. Your desire for aid, or for sympathy, is not to be indulged by dragging other people into your misfortunes.

12. There is much responsibility in imparting your own secrets, as in keeping those of your neighbour.

**ESSAYS**

**WRITTEN IN THE INTERVALS OF BUSINESS.**

**PART II.**

"The wisdom touching negotiation or business hath not been hitherto collected into writing, to the great derogation of learning, and the professors of learning. For from this root springeth chiefly that note or opinion, which by us is expressed in adage to this effect, 'that there is no great concurrence between learning and wisdom.' For of the three wisdoms which we have set down to pertain to civil life, for wisdom of behaviour, it is by learned men for the most part despised, as an inferior to virtue, and an enemy to meditation; for wisdom of government, they acquit themselves well when they are called to it, but that happeneth to few; but for the wisdom of business, wherein man's life is most conversant, there be no books of it, except some few scattered advertisements, that have no proportion to the magnitude of this subject. For if books were written of this, as the other, I doubt not but learned men with mean experience would far excel men of long experience without learning, and outshoot them in their own bow."

BACON'S *Advancement of Learning*.

## ON THE EDUCATION OF A MAN OF BUSINESS.

**T**HE essential qualities for a man of business are of a moral nature : these are to be cultivated first. He must learn betimes to love truth. That same love of truth will be found a potent charm to bear him safely through the world's entanglements ; I mean safely in the most worldly sense. Besides, the love of truth not only makes a man act with more simplicity, and therefore with less chance of error ; but it conduces to the highest intellectual development. The following passage in *The Statesman* gives the reason : 'The correspondences of wisdom and goodness are manifold ; and that they will accompany each other is to be inferred, not only because men's wisdom makes them good, but also because their goodness makes them wise.' Questions of right and wrong are a perpetual exercise of the faculties of those who are solicitous as to the right and wrong of what they do and see ; and a deep interest of the heart in these questions carries with it a deeper cultivation of the understanding, than can be easily effected by any other excitement to intellectual activity.'

2. What has just been said of the love of truth applies also to other moral qualities. Thus, charity enlightens the understanding quite as much as it purifies the heart. And indeed knowledge is not more girt about with power, than goodness is with wisdom.



3. The next thing in the training of one who is to become a man of business will be for him to form principles ; for without these, when thrown on the sea of action, he will be without rudder and compass. They are the best results of study. Whether it is history, or political economy, or ethics, that he is studying, these principles are to be the reward of his labour. A principle resembles a law in the physical world, though it can seldom have the same certainty ; as the facts, which it has to explain and embrace, do not admit of being weighed or numbered with the same exactness as material things. The principles which our student adopts at first may be unsound, may be insufficient, but he must not neglect to form some ; and must only nourish a love of truth that will not allow him to hold to any, the moment that he finds them to be erroneous.

4. Much depends upon the temperament of a man of business. It should be hopeful, that it may bear him up against the faint-heartedness, the folly, the falsehood, and the numberless discouragements which even a prosperous man will have to endure. It should also be calm ; for else he may be driven wild by any great pressure of business, and lose his time, and his head, in rushing from one unfinished thing, to begin something else. Now this wished-for conjunction of the calm and the hopeful is very rare. It is, however, in every man's power to study well his own temperament, and to provide against the defects in it.

5. A habit of thinking for himself is one which may

be acquired by the solitary student. But the habit of deciding for himself, so indispensable to a man of business, is not to be gained by study. Decision is a thing that cannot be fully exercised until it is actually wanted. You cannot play at deciding. You must have realities to deal with.

6. It is true that the formation of principles, which has been spoken of before, requires decision ; but it is of that kind which depends upon deliberate judgment : whereas, the decision which is wanted in the world's business must ever be within call, and does not judge so much as it foresees and chooses. This kind of decision is to be found in those who have been thrown early on their own resources, or who have been brought up in great freedom.

7. It would be difficult to lay down any course of study, not technical, that would be peculiarly fitted to form a man of business. He should be brought up in the habit of reasoning closely : and to ensure this, there is hardly anything better for him than the study of geometry.

8. In any course of study to be laid down for him, something like universality should be aimed at, which not only makes the mind agile, but gives variety of information. Such a system will make him acquainted with many modes of thought, with various classes of facts, and will enable him to understand men better.

9. There will be a time in his youth which may, perhaps, be well spent in those studies which are of a

metaphysical nature. In the investigation of some of the great questions of philosophy, a breadth and a tone may be given to a man's mode of thinking, which will afterwards be of signal use to him in the business of everyday life.

10. We cannot enter here into a description of the technical studies for a man of business ; but I may point out that there are works which soften the transition from the schools to the world, and which are particularly needed in a system of education, like our own, consisting of studies for the most part remote from real life. These works are such as tend to give the student that interest in the common things about him which he has scarcely ever been called upon to feel. They show how imagination and philosophy can be woven into practical wisdom. Such are the writings of Bacon. His lucid order, his grasp of the subject, the comprehensiveness of his views; his knowledge of mankind—the greatest perhaps that has ever been distinctly given out by any uninspired man,—the practical nature of his purposes, and his respect for anything of human interest, render Bacon's works unrivalled in their fitness to form the best men for the conduct of the highest affairs.

11. It is not, however, so much the thing studied as the manner of studying it. Our student is not intended to become a learned man, but a man of business ; not a 'full man,' but a 'ready man.' He must be taught to arrange and express what he knows. For this purpose let him employ himself in making digests, arranging and

classifying materials, writing narratives, and in deciding upon conflicting evidence. All these exercises require method. He must expect that his early attempts will be clumsy ; he begins, perhaps, by dividing his subject in any way that occurs to him, with no other view than that of treating separate portions of it separately ; he does not perceive, at first, what things are of one kind, and what of another, and what should be the logical order of their following. But from such rude beginnings, method is developed ; and there is hardly any degree of toil for which he would not be compensated by such a result. He will have a sure reward in the clearness of his own views, and in the facility of explaining them to others. People bring their attention to the man who gives them most profit for it ; and this will be one who is a master of method.

12. Our student should begin soon to cultivate a fluency in writing ; I do not mean a flow of words, but a habit of expressing his thoughts with accuracy, with brevity, and with readiness ; which can only be acquired by practice early in life. You find persons who, from neglect in this part of their education, can express themselves briefly and accurately, but only after much care and labour. And again, you meet with others who cannot express themselves accurately, although they have method in their thoughts, and can write with readiness ; but they have not been accustomed to look at the precise meaning of words : and such people are apt to fall into the common error of indulging in a great many words,

as if it were from a sort of hope that some of them might be to the purpose.

13. In the style of a man of business nothing is to be aimed at but plainness and precision. For instance, a close repetition of the same word for the same thing need not be avoided. The aversion to such repetition may be carried too far in all kinds of writing. In literature, however, you are seldom brought to account for misleading people ; but in business you may soon be called upon to pay the penalty for having shunned the word which would exactly have expressed your meaning.

14. I cannot conclude this essay better than by endeavouring to describe what sort of person a consummate man of business should be.

15. He should be able to fix his attention on details, and be ready to give every kind of argument a hearing. This will not encumber him, for he must have been practised beforehand in the exercise of his intellect, and be strong in principles. One man collects materials together, and there they remain, a shapeless heap ; another, possessed of method, can arrange what he has collected ; but such a man as I would describe, by the aid of principles, goes farther, and *builds* with his materials.

16. He should be courageous. The courage, however, required in civil affairs, is that which belongs rather to the able commander than the mere soldier. But any kind of courage is serviceable.

17. Besides a stout heart, he should have a patient temperament, and a vigorous but disciplined imagination; and then he will plan boldly, and with large extent of view, execute calmly, and not be stretching out his hand for things not yet within his grasp. He will let opportunities grow before his eyes until they are ripe to be seized. He will think steadily over possible failure, in order to provide a remedy or a retreat. There will be the strength of repose about him.

18. He must have a deep sense of responsibility. He must believe in the power and vitality of truth, and in all he does or says, should be anxious to express as much truth as possible.

19. His feeling of responsibility and love of truth will almost inevitably endow him with diligence, accuracy, and discreteness,—those commonplace requisites for a good man of business, without which all the rest may never come to be 'translated into action.'

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## ON THE TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS.

THIS subject may be divided into two parts : 1. Dealing with others about business ; 2. Dealing with the business itself.

### 1. *Dealing with others about business.*

2. The first part of the general subject embraces the choice and management of agents, the transaction of business by means of interviews, the choice of colleagues, and the use of councils. Each of these topics will be treated separately. There remain, however, certain general rules with respect to our dealings with others which may naturally find a place here.

3. In your converse with the world avoid anything like a juggling dexterity. The proper use of dexterity is to prevent your being circumvented by the cunning of others. It should not be aggressive.

4. Concessions and compromises form a large and a very important part of our dealings with others. Concessions must generally be looked upon as distinct defeats ; and you must expect no gratitude for them. I am far from saying that it may not be wise to make concessions, but this will be done more wisely when you understand the nature of them.

5. In making compromises, do not think to gain much by concealing your views and wishes. You are as likely to suffer from its not being known how to



please or satisfy you, as from any attempt to overreach you, grounded on a knowledge of your wishes.

6. Delay is in some instances to be adopted advisedly. It sometimes brings a person to reason when nothing else could—when his mind is so occupied with one idea, that he completely over-estimates its relative importance. He can hardly be brought to look at the subject calmly by any force of reasoning. For this disease time is the only doctor.

7. A good man of business is very watchful, over both himself and others, to prevent things from being carried against his sense of right in moments of lassitude. After a matter has been much discussed, whether to the purpose or not, there comes a time when all parties are anxious that it should be settled; and there is then some danger of the handiest way of getting rid of the matter being taken for the best.

8. It is often worth while to bestow much pains in gaining over foolish people to your way of thinking; and you should do it soon. Your reasons will always have some weight with the wise. But if at first you omit to put your arguments before the foolish, they will form their prejudices; and a fool is often very consistent, and very fond of repetition. He will be repeating his folly, in season and out of season, until at last it has a hearing; and it is hard if it does not sometimes chime in with external circumstances.

9. A man of business should take care to consult occasionally with persons of a nature quite different



from his own. To very few are given all the qualities requisite to form a good man of business. Thus a man may have the sternness and the fixedness of purpose so necessary in the conduct of affairs ; yet these qualities prevent him, perhaps, from entering into the characters of those about him. He is likely to want tact. He will be unprepared for the extent of versatility and vacillation in other men. But these defects and oversights might be remedied by consulting with persons whom he knows to be possessed of the qualities supplementary to his own. Men of much depth of mind can bear a great deal of counsel ; for it does not easily deface their own character, nor render their purposes indistinct.

2. *Dealing with the Business itself.*

10. The first thing to be considered in this division of the subject is the collection and arrangement of your materials. Do not fail to begin with the earliest history of the matter under consideration. Be careful not to give way to any particular theory, while you are merely collecting materials, lest it should influence you in the choice of them. You must work for yourself : for what you reject may be as important for you to have seen and thought about, as what you adopt ; besides, it gives you a command of the subject, and a comparative fearlessness of surprise, which you will never have, if you rely on other people for your materials. In some cases, however, you may save time by not labouring much, beforehand, at parts of the

subject which are nearly sure to be worked out in discussion.

11. When you have collected and arranged your information, there comes the task of deciding upon it. To make this less difficult, you must use method, and practise economy in thinking. You must not weary yourself by considering the same thing in the same way ; just oscillating over it, as it were ; seldom making much progress, and not marking the little that you have made. You must not lose your attention in reveries about the subject ; but must bring yourself to the point by such questions as these,—What has been done ? What is the state of the case at present ? What can be done next ? What ought to be done ? Express in writing the answers to your questions. Use the pen—there is no magic in it, but it prevents the mind from staggering about. It forces you to methodize your thoughts. It enables you to survey the matter with a less tired eye. Whereas in thinking vaguely, you not only lose time, but you acquire a familiarity with the husk of the subject, which is absolutely injurious. Your apprehension becomes dull ; you establish associations of ideas which occur again and again to distract your attention ; and you become more tired, than if you had really been employed in mastering the subject.

12. When you have arrived at your decision, you have to consider how you shall convey it. In doing this, be sure that you very rarely, if ever, say anything which is not immediately relevant to the subject. Be

ware of indulging in maxims, in abstract propositions or in anything of that kind. Let your subject fill the whole of what you say. Human affairs are so wide, subtle and complicated, that the most sagacious man had better content himself with pronouncing upon those points alone upon which his decision is called for.

13. It will often be a nice question whether or not to state the motives for your decisions. Much will depend upon the nature of the subject, upon the party whom you have to address, and upon your power of speaking out the whole truth. When you can give all your motives, it will, in most cases, be just to others, and eventually good for yourself, to do so. If you can only state some of them, then you must consider whether they are likely to mislead, or whether they tend to the full truth. And for your own sake there is this to be considered in giving only a part of your reasons : that those which you give are generally taken to be the whole, or at any rate, the best that you have. And hereafter, you may find yourself precluded from using an argument which turns out to be a very sound one, which had great weight with you, but which you were at the time unwilling, or did not think it necessary, to put forward.

14. When you have to communicate the motives for an unfavourable decision, you will naturally study how to convey them so as to give least pain, and to ensure least discussion. These are not unworthy objects ; but they are immediate ones, and therefore likely to have

their full weight with you. Beware that your anxiety to attain them does not carry you into an implied falsehood ; for, to say the least of it, evil is latent in that. Each day's converse with the world ought to confirm us in the maxim that a bold but not unkind sincerity should be the groundwork of all our dealings.

15. It will often be necessary to make a general statement respecting the history of some business. It should be lucid, yet not overburdened with details. It must have method not merely running through it, but visible upon it—it must have method in its form. You must build it up, beginning at the beginning, giving each part its due weight, and not hurrying over those steps which happen to be peculiarly familiar to yourself. You must thoroughly enter into the ignorance of others, and so avoid forestalling your conclusions. The best teachers are those who can seem to forget what they know full well ; who work out results, which have become axioms in their minds, with all the interest of a beginner, and with footsteps no longer than his.

16. It is a good practice to draw up, and put on record, an abstract of the reasons upon which you have come to a decision on any complicated subject ; so that if it is referred to, there is but little labour in making yourself master of it again. Of course this practice will be more or less necessary, according as your decision has been conveyed with a reserved or with a full statement of the reasons upon which it was grounded.

17. Of all the correspondence you receive, a concise

record should be kept ; which should also contain a note of what was done upon any letter, and of where it was sent to, or put away. Documents relating to the same subject should be carefully brought together. You should endeavour to establish such a system of arranging your papers, as may ensure their being readily referred to, and yet not require too much time and attention to be carried into daily practice. Fac-similes should be kept of all the letters which you send out.

18. These seem little things : and so they are, unless you neglect them.

## ON THE CHOICE AND MANAGEMENT OF AGENTS.

**T**HE choice of agents is a difficult matter, but any labour that you may bestow upon it is likely to be well repaid : for you have to choose persons for whose faults you are to be punished ; to whom you are to be whipping-boy.

2. In the choice of an agent, it is not sufficient to ascertain what a man knows, or to make a catalogue of his qualities ; but you have to find out how he will perform a particular service. You may be right in concluding that such an office requires certain qualities, and you may discern that such a man possesses most of them ; and in the absence of any means of making a closer trial, you may have done the best that you could do. But some deficiency, or some untoward combination of these qualities, may unfit him for the office. Hence the value of any opportunity, however slight, of observing his conduct in matters similar to those for which you want him.

3. Our previous knowledge of men will sometimes mislead us entirely, even when we apply it to circumstances but little different, as we think, from those in which we have actually observed their behaviour. For instance, you might naturally imagine that a man who shows an irritable temper in his conversation, is likely

to show a similar temper throughout the conduct of his business. But experience does not confirm this ; for you will often find that men who are intemperate in speech are cautious in writing.

4. The best agents are, in general, to be found amongst those persons who have a strong sense of responsibility. Under this feeling a man will be likely to grudge no pains ; he will pay attention to minute things ; and what is of much importance, he will prefer being considered ever so stupid, rather than pretend to understand his orders before he does so.

5. You should behave to your subordinate agents in such a manner that they should not be afraid to be frank with you. They should be able to comment freely upon your directions, and may thus become your best counsellors. For those who are intrusted with the execution of any work, are likely to see things which have been overlooked by the person who designed it, however sagacious he may be.

6. You must not interfere unnecessarily with your agents, as it gives them the habit of leaning too much upon you. Sir Walter Scott says of Canning, 'I fear he works himself too hard, under the great error of trying to do too much with his own hand, and to see everything with his own eyes. Whereas the greatest general and the first statesman must, in many cases, be content to use the eyes and fingers of others, and hold themselves contented with the exercise of the greatest care in the choice of implements.' Most men



of vigorous minds and nice perceptions will be apt to interfere too much ; but it should always be one of the chief objects of a person in authority to train up those around him to do without him. He should try to give them some self-reliance. It should be his aim to create a standard as to the way in which things are to be done—not to do them all himself. That standard is likely to be maintained for some time, in case of his absence, illness, or death ; and it will be applied daily to many things that must be done without a careful inspection on his part, even when he is in full vigour.

7. With respect to those agents whom you employ to represent you, your inclination should be to treat them with hearty confidence. In justice to them, as well as for your own sake, the limits which you lay down for their guidance, should be precise. Within those limits you should allow them a large discretionary power. You must be careful not to blame your agent for departing from your orders, when in fact the discrepancy which you notice is nothing more than the usual difference in the ways in which different men set about the same object, even when they employ similar means for its accomplishment. For a difference of this kind you should have been prepared. But if you are in haste to blame your representative, your captiousness may throw a great burden upon him unnecessarily. It is not the success of the undertaking only that he will thenceforward be intent upon : he will be anxious that each step should be done exactly



after your fancy. And this may embarrass him, render him indecisive, and lead to his failing altogether.

8. The surest way to make agents do their work is to show them that their efforts are appreciated with nicety. For this purpose, you should not only be very careful in your promotions and rewards; but in your daily dealings with them, you should beware of making slight or haphazard criticisms on any of their proceedings. Your praise should not only be right in the substance, but put upon the right foundation: it should point to their most strenuous and most judicious exertion. I do not mean that it should always be given at the time of those exertions being made; but it should show that they had not passed by unnoticed.

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## ON THE TREATMENT OF SUITORS.

THE maxim, 'Pars beneficii est, quod petitur si bene neget,' is misinterpreted by many people. They construe 'bene' *kindly*, which is right: but they are inclined to fancy that this kindness consists in courtesy, rather than in explicitness and truth.

2. You should be very loth to encourage expectations in a suitor, which you have not then the power of fulfilling, or of putting in a course of fulfilment;—for Hope, an architect above rules, can build, in reverse, a pyramid upon a point. From a very little origin there often arises a wildness of expectation which quite astounds you. Like the Fisherman in the *Arabian Nights*, when you see 'a genie twice as high as the greatest of giants,' you may well wonder how he could have come out of so small a vessel; but in your case, there will be no chance of persuading the monster to ensconce himself again, for the purpose of convincing you that such a feat is not impossible.

3. In addition also to the natural delusions of hope, there is sometimes the artifice of pretending to take your words for more than they are well known to mean.

4. There is a deafness peculiar to suitors; they should therefore be answered as much as possible in writing. The answers should be expressed in simple

terms ; and all phrases should be avoided which are not likely to convey a clear idea to the man who hears them for the first time. There are many persons who really do not understand forms of writing which may have become common to you. When they find that courteous expressions mean nothing, they think that a wilful deception has been practised upon them. And in general, you should consider that people will naturally put the largest construction upon every ambiguous expression, and every term of courtesy which can be made to express anything at all in their favour.

5. It will often be necessary to see applicants ; and in this case you must bear in mind that you have not only the delusions of hope and the misinterpretation of language to contend against, but also the imperfection of men's memories. If possible, therefore, do not let the interview be the termination of the matter : let it lead to something in writing, so that you may have an opportunity of recording what you wished to express. Avoid a promising manner ; as people will be apt to find words for it. Do not resort to evasive answers for the purpose only of bringing the interview to a close ; nor shrink from giving a distinct denial, merely because the person to whom you ought to give it is before you, and you would have to witness any pain which it might occasion. Let not that balance of justice which Corruption could not alter one hair's breadth, be altogether disturbed by Sensibility.

6. To determine in what case the refusal of a suit

should be accompanied by reasons, is a matter of considerable difficulty. It must depend very much on what portion of the truth you are able to bring forward. This was mentioned before as a general principle, in the transaction of business, and it may be well to abide by it in answering applications. You will naturally endeavour to give somewhat of a detailed explanation when you are desirous of showing respect to the person whom you are addressing : but if the explanation is not a sound or a complete one, it would be better to see whether the respect could not be shown in some other way.

7. In many cases, and especially when the suit is a mere project of effrontery, it will perhaps be prudent to refuse, without entering at all upon the grounds of your refusal. In an explanation addressed to the applicant, you will be apt to omit the special reasons for your refusal, as they are likely to be such as would mortify his self-love ; and so you lay yourself open to an accusation of unfairness, when he finds, perhaps, that you have selected some other person, who came as fully within the scope of your general objections as he did himself. Therefore, where you are not required, and do not like, to give special reasons, it may often be the best course simply to refuse, or to couch your refusal in impregnable generalities.

8. Remember that in giving any reason at all for refusing, you lay some foundation for a future request.

9. Those who have constantly to deal with suitors

are in danger of giving way too much to disgust at the intrusion, importunity, and egotism, which they meet with. As an antidote to this, they should remember that the suit which is a matter of business to them, and which, perhaps, from its hopelessness they look upon with little interest, seems to the suitor himself a thing of absorbing importance. And they should expect a man in distress to be as unreasonable as a sick person, and as much occupied by his own disorder.

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## INTERVIEWS.

**T**HERE is much that cannot be done without interviews. It would often require great labour not only on your part, but also on the part of others whom you cannot command, to effect by means of writing what may easily be accomplished in a single interview. The pen may be a surer, but the tongue is a nicer instrument. In talking, most men sooner or later show what is uppermost in their minds ; and this gives a peculiar interest to verbal communications. Besides, there are looks, and tones, and gestures, which form a significant language of their own. In short, interviews may be made very useful ; and are, in general, somewhat hazardous things : but many people look upon them rather as the pastime of business, than as a part of it requiring great discretion.

2. Interviews are perhaps of most value when they bring together several conflicting interests, or opinions, each of which has thus an opportunity ascertaining the amount and variety of opposition which it must expect, and so is worn into moderation. It would take a great deal of writing to effect this.

3. Interviews are to be resorted to when you wish to prevent the other party from pledging himself upon a matter which requires much explanation ; where you see what will probably be his answer to your first

proposition, and know that you have a good rejoinder, which you would wish him to hear before he commits himself by writing upon the subject. In cases of this kind, however, there is the similar danger of a man's talking himself into obstinacy before he has heard all that you have to say.

4. Interviews are very serviceable in those matters where you would at once be able to come to a decision, if you did but know the real inclination of the other parties concerned: and, in general, you should take care occasionally to see those with whom you are dealing, if the thing in question is likely to be much influenced by their individual peculiarities, and you require a knowledge of the men. Now this is the case with the greatest part of human affairs.

5. You frequently want verbal communication in order to encourage the timid, to settle the undecided, and to bring on some definite stage in the proceedings.

6. The above are instances in which interviews are to be sought for on their own account; but they are sometimes necessary, merely because people will not be satisfied without them. There are persons who can hardly believe that their arguments have been attended to until they have had verbal evidence of the fact. They think that they could easily answer all your objections, and that they should certainly succeed in persuading you, if they had an opportunity of discussing the matter orally; and it may be of importance to remove this delusion by an interview.

7. On the other hand interviews are to be avoided, when you have reasons which determine your mind, but which you cannot give to the other party. If you do accede to an interview, you are almost certain to be tempted into giving some reasons ; and these not being the strong ones, will very likely admit of a fair answer ; and so, after much shuffling, you will be obliged to resort to an appearance of mere wilfulness at last.

8. You should also be averse to transacting business verbally, with very eager, sanguine persons, unless you feel that you have sufficient force and readiness for it. There are people who do not understand any dissent or opposition on your part, unless it is very manifest. They are fully prepossessed by their own views, and they go on talking as if you agreed with them. Perhaps you feel a delicacy in interrupting them, and undeceiving them at once. The time for doing so passes by ; and ever afterwards they quote you as an authority for all their folly. Or it ends by your going away pledged to a course of conduct which is anything but what you approve.

9. But perhaps there are no interviews less to be sought after than those in which you have to appear in connection with one or two other parties who have exactly the same interest in the matter as your own, and must be supposed to speak your sentiments, but with whom you have had little or no previous communication ; or whose judgment you find that you cannot rely upon. In such a case you are continually



in danger of being compromised by the indiscretion of any one of your associates. For you do not like to disown one of your own side before the adverse party ; or you are afraid of taking all the odium of opposition on yourself. You may perhaps be quite certain that your indiscreet ally would be as anxious as yourself to recall his words if he could perceive their consequences : but these are things which you cannot explain to him in that company.

10. The men who profit least by interviews are often those who are most inclined to resort to them. they are irresolute persons, who wish to avoid pledging themselves to anything, and so they choose an interview as the safest course which occurs to them. Besides it looks like progress : and makes them, as they say, see their way. Such persons, however, are very soon entangled in their own words, or they are oppressed by the earnest opinions of the people they meet. For to conduct an interview in the manner which they intend, would require them to have at command that courage and decision, which they never attain, without a long and miserly weighing of consequences.

11. Indolent persons are very apt to resort to interviews ; for it saves them the trouble of thinking steadily, and of expressing themselves with precision, which they are called upon to do, if they come to write about the subject. Now they certainly may learn a great deal in a short time, and with very little

trouble, by means of an interview : but if they have to take up the position of an antagonist, of a judge, or indeed any but that of a learner, then it is very unsafe to indulge in an interview, without having prepared themselves for it.

12. To conduct an interview successfully, requires not only information and force of character, but also a certain intellectual readiness. People are so apt to think that there are but two ways in which a thing can terminate. They are ignorant of the number of combinations which even a few circumstances will admit of. And perhaps a proposal is made which they are totally unprepared for, and which they cannot deal with, from being unable to apprehend with sufficient quickness its main drift and consequences.

13. There are cases where the persons meeting are upon no terms of equality respecting the interview ; where one of them has a great deal to maintain, and the other nothing to lose. Such an instance occurs in the case of a minister receiving a deputation. He has the interests of the public to maintain, and the intentions of the government to keep concealed. He has to show that he fully understands the arguments laid before him ; and all the while to conceal his own bias, and to keep himself perfectly free from any pledge. Any member of the deputation may utter anything that he pleases without much harm coming of it ; but every word that the minister says is liable to be interpreted against him to the uttermost. There are similar

occasions in private life, where a man has to act upon the defensive, and where the interview may be considered not as a battle, but as a siege. A man should then confine himself to few words. He should bring forward his strongest arguments only, and not state too many of them at a time ; for he should keep a good force in reserve. Besides it will be much more difficult for the other party to mystify and pervert a few arguments than a set speech. And he will leave them no room for gaining a semblance of victory by answering the unimportant parts of his statement.

14. Again, whatever readiness and knowledge of the subjects he may possess, he should have somebody by him on his side. For he is opposed to numbers, and must expect that amongst them there will always be some one ready to meet his arguments, if not with arguments, at any rate with the proper fallacies ; or at least that there will be some one stupid enough to commence replying without an answer. He should therefore have a person who should be able to aid him in replying ; and there will be a satisfaction in having somebody in the room who is not in a hostile position towards him. Besides he will want a witness : for he must not imagine that the number of his opponents is any safeguard against misrepresentation, but rather a cause, in most people, of less attention, and less feeling of responsibility. And lastly, the most precise man in the world, if he speaks much on any matter, may be glad to hear what was the impression upon another

person's mind : in short, to see whether he conveyed exactly what he meant to convey.

15. The best precaution, however, which any man can take under these circumstances, is to state in writing, at the conclusion of the interview, the substance of what he apprehends to have been said, and of what he intends to do. This would require great readiness and the most earnest attention ; but, in the end, it would save very much trouble and misapprehension. A similar practice might be adopted in most interviews of business, where the subject would warrant such a formality. It would not only be good in itself, but its influence would be felt throughout the interview ; and people would come prepared, and would speak with precision, when there was an immediate prospect of their statements being recorded.

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## OF COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS,

AND, IN GENERAL, OF BODIES OF MEN CALLED  
TOGETHER TO COUNSEL OR TO DIRECT.

**S**UCH bodies are the fly-wheels and safety-valves of the machinery of business. They are sometimes looked upon as superfluities, but by their means the motion is equalised, and a great force is applied with little danger.

2. They are apt contrivances for obtaining an average of opinions, for ensuring freedom from corruption, and the reputation of that freedom. On ordinary occasions they are more courageous than most individuals. They can bear odium better. The world seldom looks to personal character as the predominating cause of any of their doings, though this is one of the first things which occurs to it when the public acts of any individual are in question. The very indistinctness which belongs to their corporate existence adds a certain weight to their decisions.

3. Councils are serviceable as affording some means of judging how things are likely to be generally received. It is seldom that any one person, however-capable he may be of framing, or of executing a good measure, can come to a satisfactory conclusion as to the various appearances which that measure will present, or can be

made to present, to others. In some instances he may be so little under the influence of the common prejudices around him, as not to understand their force, and therefore not to perceive how a new thing will be received. Now, if he has the opportunity of consulting several persons together, he will not only have the advantage of their common sense and joint information, but he will also have a chance of hearing what will be the common nonsense of ordinary men upon the subject, and of providing as far as possible against it.

4. On the other hand, these bodies are much tempted by the division of responsibility to sloth ; and therefore to dealing with things superficially, and inaccurately. Another evil is the want of that continuity of purpose in their proceedings which is to be found in those of an individual.

5. As it tends directly to diminish many of the advantages before mentioned, it is, in general, a wrong thing for a member of a Council or Commission to let the outer world know that his private opinion is adverse to any of the decisions of his colleagues ; or indeed to indicate the part, whatever it may have been, that he has taken in the transaction of the general body.

6. The proper number of persons to constitute such bodies must vary according to the purpose for which they are called together. Such a number as would afford any temptation for oratorical display should, in general, be avoided. Another limit, which it may be prudent to adopt, is to have only so many members as

to make it possible in most cases for each to take a part in the proceedings. By having a greater number, you will not ensure more scrutiny into the business. It will still be done by a few ; but with a feeling of less responsibility than if they were left to themselves, and with the interruptions and inconvenience arising from the number of persons present. Besides, the greater the number, the more likelihood there is of parties being formed in the Council.

7. Whether the members are many or few, there should be formalities strictly maintained. This is essential in the conduct of business. Otherwise there will be such a state of things as that described by Pepys in his account of a meeting of the Privy Council ; which, like most of his descriptions, one feels to be true to the life. ‘Went to a Committee of the Council to discourse concerning pressing of men ; but, Lord ! how they meet ; never sit down ; one comes, now another goes, then comes another ; one complaining that nothing is done, another swearing that he hath been there these two hours and nobody come. At last my Lord Annesley says, “I think we must be forced to get the King to come to every Committee ; for I do not see that we do anything at any time but when he is here.”

8. The great art of making use of councils, commissions and such like bodies, is to know what kind of matter to put before them, and in what state to present it. ‘There be three parts of business,—the preparation ;



the debate, or examination ; and the perfection ; whereof if you look for dispatch, let the middle only be the work of many, and the first and last the work of few.\* There is likely to be a great waste of time and labour when a thing is brought in all its first vagueness to be debated or examined by a number of persons. And there will be much in the 'preparation' and 'perfection' of a matter which will only become confused by being submitted to a full assembly. You might as well think of making love by a council or a board. It should therefore be the business of some one, either in the council, or subordinate to it, to bring the matter forward in a distinct and definite shape. Otherwise there will be a wilderness of things said before you arrive at any legitimate point of discussion. And hence Bacon adds, 'the proceeding upon somewhat conceived in writing doth for the most part facilitate dispatch : for though it should be wholly rejected, yet that negative is more pregnant of direction than an indefinite, as ashes are more generative than the dust.'

9. In order to bring the responsibility of any act of the general body home to the individuals composing it, no method seems so good as that of requiring the signatures of a large proportion of the council or commission to the directions given in the matter. Even the most careless people have a sort of aversion to signing things which they have never considered. This

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\*BACON'S *Essay on Dispatch*.



plan is better than requiring the signatures of the whole body. For it is less likely to degenerate into a mere formality ; and besides, the other course would give any one crotchety man too great a power of hindrance.

10. The responsibility, also, of those persons who settle the details of a matter, whether secretaries, or committees of the council, should be clearly attested either by their signatures, or by a memorandum showing what part of the business has been entrusted to them.

11. As to the kind of men to be especially chosen or rejected, it would be trifling to lay down any minute rules. You often require a diversity of natures, in order that the various modes of acting congenial to different minds and tempers should have an opportunity of being canvassed.

12. When a man's faults are those which come to the surface in social life, they must be noted as certain hindrances to his usefulness as a member of any of these bodies. A man may be proud or selfish, and yet a good councillor ; he may be secretly ill-tempered, and yet a reasonable man in his converse with the world, capable of bearing opposition, and an excellent coadjutor : but if he is vain, or fond of dispute, or dictatorial, you know that his efficiency in a council must to a certain extent be counteracted.

13. Those men are the grace and strength of councils who are of that healthful nature which is content to take defeat with good humour, and of that

practical turn of mind which makes them set heartily to work upon plans and propositions which have been originated in opposition to their judgment ; who are not anxious to shift responsibility upon others ; and who do not allude to their former objections with triumph, when those objections come to be borne out by the result. In acting with such persons you are at your ease. You counsel sincerely and boldly, and not with a timorous regard to your own part in the matter.

14. The men who have method, and, as it were, a judicial intellect, are most valuable councillors. Without some such in a council, a great deal of cleverness goes for nothing : as there is nobody to see what has been stated and answered, to what their deliberations tend, and what progress has been made. Such persons can gather the sense of a mixed assembly, and suggest some line of action which may honestly meet the different views of the various members. They will bring back the subject-matter when it has all but floated away, while the others have been looking for sea-weed, or throwing stones at one another on the shore.

## PARTY-SPIRIT.

**P**ARTY-SPIRIT gives a pretext for the exercise of such scorn and malice, as could not be tolerated, if they did not claim to have their origin in fervent wishes for the public welfare. It consumes in idle contests that energy which the state has need of. By the perpetual interchange of hard names, it tends to make a people suspicious and uncharitable ; or it inclines them to think lightly of the kind of offences which they here so often charged against their most eminent public men ; or it 'gives them a habit of using epithets and affecting sensations of moral indignation which bear no proportion to the thing itself, or to their own real feelings about the thing ; of taking the names of Truth and Virtue in vain.'

2. Under the influence of party-spirit, a nation sometimes acts towards its dependencies, and in its foreign relations, not with the whole force of the country, but with a portion of it only, bearing some reference to the excess of strength in the ruling party.

3. Party-spirit makes people abjure independent thinking. It can leave nothing alone. It must uplift a hand in every man's quarrel, as a knight-errant of old, but with small sense of chivalry. It forces its odious friendship or its unprovoked hostility where neither is fitting. Even the wisest require to be constantly on

their guard against it ; or its insidious prejudices, like dirt and insects on the glasses of a telescope, will blur the view, and make them see strange monsters where there are none.

4. Party-spirit incites people to attack with rashness, and to defend without sincerity. Violent partisans are apt to treat a political opponent in such a manner, when they argue with him, as to make the question quite personal ; as if he had been present, as it were, and a chief agent in all the crimes, which they attribute to his party. Nor does the accused hesitate to take the matter upon himself, and, in fancied self-defence, to justify things which otherwise he would not hesitate, for one moment, to condemn.

5. These evils must not be allowed to take shelter under the unfounded supposition that party dealings are different from any thing else in the world, and that they are to be governed by much looser laws than those which regulate any other human affairs. It is a very dangerous thing to acknowledge two sorts of truth, two kinds of charity.

6. Is there no harm in never looking further than the worst motive that can possibly be imagined for the actions of our political adversaries ? Are we to consider the opposite party as so many Samaritans ? And is there nothing that we have ever heard or read, which should induce us to abate our Jewish antipathy to these brethren of ours, who do not worship at our temple ? This is an illustration from which political bigots cannot escape.

Even their own pretensions of being always in the right will only bring the instance more home to them. The Jews were right about the matter in dispute between them and the Samaritans. 'Salvation is with the Jews.' But this is never held out to us as any justification of their behaviour.

7. To hear some men talk one would suppose that political distinctions were natural distinctions ; and that they depended upon a man's personal qualities. These people seem to think that all the good are ranged in a row on one side ; and all the bad on the other. Now the utmost that can reasonably be alleged is, that there exists in most men a predisposition to one or other of the two great parties which are to be found in every free country : but this cannot be depended upon as the cause which determines men in general to attach themselves to a party.

8. As it is, some range themselves on one side, and some on the other, just as they used to do in their school games, and with about as much reflection. A large number of persons, in all ranks, hold hereditary opinions. There are thousands who make their convictions on all political subjects subservient to their feelings as members of a class, and to what they believe to be the interests of that class. Then there are those who think whatever the little mob in which they live pleases to think : and this is the most comfortable way of thinking. Direct self-interest decides some men. The merest accidents determine others. For instance, how

much of a man's opinions through life will depend upon any strong-minded or earnest person that he may have lived with at a time when he was uninformed himself and malleable. Remember too, that it requires but a slight bias to send a man into a party ; for let him agree with it only in a few points, and he will be set down as belonging to it. Then, perhaps, he is called upon to act in some way or other politically, and a very little determines a man whose thoughts upon the subject altogether have been few and vague. Thus a political character is impressed upon him without his having had much to do in the matter ; but afterwards, things many will probably occur to deepen that impression, and to make him a decided partisan.

9. A true analysis of the composition of parties would afford a good lesson of political tolerance. We should learn from it what a mixed thing a party is ; that there is no single law that will explain its cohesion ; and still less is there any good ground for insisting that the distinctions of party have their origin in moral worth or turpitude.

10. It is of importance that we should train ourselves to make the fitting allowance for the political prejudices of others.

11. Pascal asks, 'Whence comes it to pass that we have so much patience with those who are maimed in body and so little with those who are defective in mind ?' And he says, 'It is because the cripple acknowledges that we have the use of our legs ; whereas

the fool obstinately maintains that we are the persons who halt in understanding. Without this difference in the case, neither object would move our resentment, but both our compassion.' We might try to overlook this difference, and find it an aid to charity to consider that men's prejudices are the same kind of things as their personal defects. Whether a man is labouring under some degree of physical deafness ; or under some strong prejudice, which being ever by his side, is always sure of the first hearing, and produces a sort of numbness to anything else : it comes nearly to the same thing as regards the weight which he is likely to attach to any of our arguments, when adverse to his prejudice. In both cases the cause is decided without our being fully heard.

12. But at the same time that we have recourse to such views as the above, to moderate our impatience of other people's prejudices, we should keep a vigilant watch on our own. We often forget that we are partisans ourselves, and that we are contending with partisans. We first give ourselves credit for a judicial impartiality in all that concerns public affairs ; and then call upon our opponents actually to be as impartial as we assert ourselves to be. But few of us, I suspect, have any right to take this high ground. Our passions master us : and we know them to be our enemies. Our prejudices imprison us : and like madmen, we take our jailors for a guard of honour.

13. I do not mean to suggest that truth and right



are always to be found in middle courses ; or that there is anything particularly philosophic in concluding that 'both parties are in the wrong,' and 'that there is a great deal to be said on both sides of the question,'—phrases which may belong to indolence as well as to charity and candour. Let a man have a hearty strong opinion, and strive by all fair \*means to bring it into action—if it is, in truth, an *opinion* and not a thing inhaled like some infectious disorder.

14. Many persons persuade themselves that the life and well-being of a state are something like their own fleeting health and brief prosperity. And hence, they see portentous things in every subject of political dispute. Such fancies add much to the intolerance of party-spirit. But the state will bear much killing. It has outlived many generations of political prophets—and it may survive the present ones.

15. Divisions in a state are necessary\* consequence of freedom ; and the practical question is not to dispense with party, but to make the most good of it. The contest must exist : but it may have something of generosity in it. And how is this to be ? Not by the better kind of men abstaining from any attention to politics, or shunning party connexions altogether. Staying away from a danger which in many instances it is their duty to face, would be but a poor way of keeping themselves safe. It would be a doubtful policy to encourage political indifference as a cure for the evils of party-spirit, even if it were a certain cure ; but we cannot take this



for granted, especially when we observe that the vices of party are not always to be seen most in those who have the most earnest political feelings. Indeed, the attachment to a party may be, and often is, an affection of the most generous kind : and it must, I think, be allowed, that even with men who do not discern the true end of party, nor its limits, party-spirit is often a rude kind of patriotism.

16. The question, then, is how to regulate party-spirit. Like all other affections, its tendency is to overspread the whole character. One who has nothing in his soul to resist it, or much that assimilates with its worst influences, is carried away by it to evil. But a good man will show the earnestness of his attachment to his party by his endeavour to elevate its character ; and in the utmost heat of party contests, he will try to maintain a love of truth, and a regard for the charities of life.

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# NOTES.

## PART I

**MOTTO.** JEREMY TAYLOR (1613-67) was one of the greatest theological writers of the 17th Century, and distinguished himself as an advocate of religious toleration. The best known of his works are the treatises on *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*. His *Ductor Dubitantium* (=a guide for those who doubt) is a work dealing with questions of casuistry. The extract contains some words archaic in spelling and signification, and the language is somewhat obscure and involved, as was commonly the case with prose writing in the 17th century.

The *substance* of the passage is—we must never expect anything like perfection in the writings of men; for we write, for the most part, what we have very imperfect and partial knowledge about; and we are, moreover, incapable of communicating our thoughts fully to others. [The *reason* why this motto is prefixed to these *Essays* :—The writer wishes modestly to deny that his *Essays* contain nothing but absolutely true and original observations, that the subjects are all treated as they ought to be, or that he has in all cases succeeded in communicating his thoughts clearly to the reader.]

**And he.....his opinion :** There is but little in the writings of men that is perfectly correct; our knowledge, as well as our power of imparting truths, are imperfect. A writer who knows this, must be satisfied with only a small measure of success—such as the nature of the subject or his own limited powers will enable him to attain; or he must give up all thoughts of influencing the opinions of others. **How little :** how rarely do the writings of men contain full and perfectly reliable truths. *Certainty* is here equiv. to ‘infallibility,’ and is contrasted with “probable inducements” &c. described below. **Discourses**—essays or treatises; all writings on serious subjects were at one time called *discourses*. **How we know :** that our knowledge is partial, and our power of conveying this knowledge to others is also limited. The italicised words are from the Bible,—*First Epistle to the Corinthians* ch xiii, where St. Paul contrasts the imperfect knowledge in this life with that to be attained after salvation in the life to come. *Prophesie* (now spelt *prophecy*) here=declare, preach. **Whereof**—of which. **Such proportion**—the comparatively small extent to which he can attain knowledge (or communicate it.) **Things will bear**—the subjects will admit of. It is implied that from the very nature

of certain subjects (especially theological subjects) our knowledge of them is very imperfect. **Himself**: the writer himself is often but poorly qualified for the work. *He himself* would be used at the present day. **Never seek**: must abandon (as hopeless) the attempt to make other men change their views or adopt his own; *i. e.* he must give up the idea of writing for the public. *To alter or &c.* is a very condensed form of expression (hardly allowable at the present day), equiv. to 'alter any man's opinion, or persuade any man to be of his opinion.' **Greatest part**: Most of the books that are extant. **Probable**—not certain or conclusive. **Inducements**—inferences, reasonings (obsolete in this sense—the word now means 'motives.') It is not quite clear whether (i) only *inductive reasonings* (*i. e.* generalisations) or (ii) reasonings generally, are meant here. But (ii) is better. **Plausibilities**—statements or arguments that *seem* sound or convincing (but are not really such.) **Witty**—ingenious; clever. **Entertainments**—diversions; things delightful or amusing to read. *Witty entertainments* are intellectual treats, subtleties which charm the thoughtful reader,—both the words being used in senses unfamiliar at the present day. [The "discourses" spoken of in this sentence are generally called literary essays; even at the present day much of the prose writing which falls under 'literature' proper—as distinguished from history, philosophy, science &c.—is of the kind Jeremy Taylor describes.] **Throng of notices**—crowd of observations. *Notice* here means what men have noted, or set down in writing;—the "throng of notices" consists of the "heap of probable inducements" &c. **Not unlike**—*i. e.* may be fitly compared to. **Accidents**—events; all that 'falls out' (*L. cedo*=I fall) or happens. This etymological sense of the word is wider than the meaning it now has. **Tells a new tale**—gives a different account of what has happened (from the accounts furnished by others.) Each has his own story to tell. Applied to writers, this means that different writers present us with different views of the world and its affairs, of the various subjects they deal with. **Something.....saw not**—this tale being made up of two elements—(1) what the narrator saw, (2) what he has invented, repeated from others, or wrongly imagined to be true. [Of course as to what they all saw, each man agrees with the rest; it is in the "great many things that he saw not," that each man's story is more or less different from the stories of others. So in literature, when writers record what they have themselves observed (as they do only to a small extent) they agree amongst themselves; but when they go beyond that, the reader is puzzled and confused by their conflicting views and observations.] **His eyes and his fear**—what he actually observed and what he merely imagined or anticipated through fear. **Joyning together equally in**—furnishing together; *i. e.*, the one (eyes) furnishing *instruction*, just as the other (fear) furnishes the *illusion*. Mark the spelling. **Instructions**—what

is really instructive ; correct information. **Illusion**—what is deceptive or unreal ; what one wrongly imagines he sees (under the influence of fear.) **These** : *i. e.* instructions and illusion, or “what he saw” and what “he saw not”. **Make up**—together form or constitute ; the stories consist of these two elements. **Ductor Dubitantium** : see note on Jeremy Taylor, *sup.*

The meaning of the passage may be expressed as follows in modern English :—There is little certainty in the writings of men, for our knowledge is partial, and our power of communicating truths to others is also imperfect. In all matters, what we know is very small compared with what we do not know. A writer who knows this, must be content to deal with a subject as fully as either the nature of the subject admits of, or as his own powers permit him to do ; if he wants to do more, he might as well give up the idea of changing any man’s opinion, or of inculcating his own. For the greatest part of the literature existing in the world is nothing but a heap of probable inferences, statements that only appear reasonable, and clever entertaining things ; and the great mass of observations (to be found in books) may be likened to the various stories of a battle as told by different men, each of whom mixes up the little he actually saw with a great deal of what he did not see, but merely imagined under the influence of fear.

## ESSAY I.

### ON PRACTICAL WISDOM.

**Substance** of the paragraphs :

1. Practical wisdom serves to establish harmony amongst the various parts of our nature, making us do what we can and ought to do, and preventing us from wasting our energies in regret.

2. Practical wisdom makes us adopt the best means available, instead of seeking the shortest or neatest.

3. Practical wisdom is not a distinct faculty, but a harmony amongst all the faculties and affections. It is not identical with constancy and definiteness of aim, which even a very narrow-minded selfish man may have.

4. Practical wisdom is not inconsistent with imagination, but utilizes it by bringing it under the control of reason.

5. Practical wisdom is not satisfied with small temporary expedients, but seeks to do a thing thoroughly.

6. Practical wisdom combines contemplation with action, recognises compromise, but insists upon uprightness and the application of high principles to the affairs of life.

**Para I. Practical wisdom**—such wisdom as is available in practice, *i. e.*, in the affairs of life. It is what enables a man to act with sound judgment and to achieve success in worldly matters. Such wisdom is contrasted with *speculative wisdom*, or the wisdom of a philosopher. *Wisdom* is a complex idea hardly to be expressed by a paraphrase, but may be roughly described as sound judgment and sagacity—the power of discerning and judging correctly. **Acts** ..... **mind**—performs the same function, works in the same way, amongst the faculties of the mind. This function is described below—“combining &c.” **Gravitation**—the force by which bodies are drawn or tend towards the centre (*e.g.* the centre of the earth in the case of earthly objects.) It is also used of the effect of such force. **Material**—physical, as distinguished from *mental* or *psychical*.—**Combining**—causing things to unite, or work together. Thus the sun and the planets combine to form the solar system through the action of the force or principle of gravitation. So practical wisdom enables one to combine *e.g.* imagination and reason, contemplation and action, &c. ; see paras 4 and 6. **Keeping**.....**places** : preventing one thing from interfering with another. Planets are kept each in its own orbit by the force of gravitation ; similarly, practical wisdom keeps every faculty or virtue at work in its proper sphere,—*e.g.* does not allow benevolence to be weakened by prudence, or our duties as a friend to interfere with our duties as a citizen. **Maintaining**...**mutual dependence**—preserving harmony. **Our system**—our nature as human beings (which is likened to the solar system.) How this mutual dependence is maintained, is illustrated in the concluding para. **It**.....**reminding us**—it never allows us to forget, or lose sight of. **Where we are**—our circumstances ; the real state of affairs in which we are placed. **Fancy**—world of imagination ; ideal state of existence. This sentence means that men wanting in practical wisdom are apt to think and act as if they were richer, younger or abler than they really are, and as if the age and country they live in were very different from the reality. **Wait for dainty duties**—do nothing till we get some nice or palatable duties ; neglect our present duties, in expectation of having more agreeable duties later on—some opportunity of figuring as a hero, for instance, *Dainty* is traced to *L. dignus*=worthy ; hence ‘what is of worth in the cycs of an epicure—costly or rare dishes’ ; from this comes its meaning here—‘having a halo of grandeur.’ It was at one time erroneously traced to *L. dens, dentes*,—tooth, to account for the meaning ‘toothsome or palatable.’ *Dainty* is explained by **pleasant to the imagination**, *i. e.* delightful to dream about, or fancy ourselves performing. **Insists &c.**—Compels us to do. **Are before us**—plainly lie in our life’s path ; are what we have got to do now. The sentence means—the practically-wise man is never fastidious in



matters of duty, but **does** what under the circumstances he ought to do, however commonplace or disagreeable the duty may be. **Inclined**—disposed ; given. **Make much** &c.—turn to the best account. The phrase usually means ‘to praise or value highly ;’ but it is here equiv. to ‘make the *most* of.’ **Given to**—in the habit of. **Ponder over**—dwell in imagination on ; waste thought on. **Schemes**—plans ; designs. **Carried on**—pursued ; undertaken. **Irrevocable**—*lit.* not to be recalled ; what cannot be changed. *What is irrevocable* means the stern facts of life. **Other than** &c.—*i.e.* not irrevocable ; capable of being altered. The sentence means : A man possessed of Practical Wisdom uses his powers and opportunities to accomplish as much as possible, instead of uselessly dreaming of what he might have done under different circumstances—*e.g.* if he had been a millionaire.

**It does not suffer** : This sentence explains the latter part of the preceding one ; a wise man never indulges in useless regret for what is irrevocable. **Suffer**—permit, allow. **Energies**—power of working. **In regret** : *viz.* for lost opportunities, past errors &c. If our minds are too much occupied with sad thoughts of what we might have done, we fail to effect what is still possible for us. **In journeying with it**—if we have practical wisdom to guide us. **Towards the sun**—cheerfully on. **And the shadow** : This shows what is meant by going towards the sun ; with the sun in front, one cannot see the shadow of himself and his burden, as he would if he turned his back to the sun. The metaphorical meaning is : our path is not darkened with the burden of our regrets—with the regretful memory of past errors. **Shadow**—dark thought. **Falls behind** : and so we are not perpetually reminded of the burden ; we do not think how heavy a load it is.

**Para 2. Bringing to completion**—accomplishing ; carrying out. **It looks for**—which Practical Wisdom leads us to seek. **Shortest**—requiring the less time than any other. Such means are called “small expedients”, and “time-serving patches” in para 5. **Neatest**—cleverest ; looking most tidy or smart. **Best.....imagined**—ideally best (but not always the best in practice.) **They** : the means adopted by Practical Wisdom. **This advantage**—the following recommendation or circumstance in their favour. **Within reach**—available ; what can be really used.

\*This paragraph means that a man of Practical Wisdom seeks such means as *can* be adopted under the circumstances, and not such methods as might be admired most—either as quickest, most ingenious, or ideally the best.

**Para 3. Liable.....wisdom**—in danger of forming wrong ideas as to what Practical Wisdom consists in. **Come to perceive**—observe clearly, or realise. **Predominant**—stronger than all others ; controlling the rest. **Faculty, disposition** : Faculty is a *power* of the mind as it used to be called, or rather one of.

the ways in which the mind works, *e. g.* memory, imagination, will &c. *Disposition* or propensity is the tendency to certain actions ; thus one man is of a benevolent, another of a selfish, a third of a cruel disposition. Disposition has reference to *conduct* and *character*, while Faculty is concerned with the *operations of the mind*. **Affections**—Emotions or feelings—*e. g.* love, fear &c. [The meaning of the sentence is—It would be a mistake to think that a man possessing Practical Wisdom must have some faculty so strong as to make all other faculties subordinate to it or a decided inclination to act in a certain way. On the contrary, in such a man all the faculties, desires &c. work in harmony—all the parts of his nature are properly developed.] **Well-chosen ends**—the right ends or objects are kept in view ; a man of Practical Wisdom chooses neither ignoble nor impracticable ends. **Judiciously adapted**—wisely contrived ; such means as are best suited to the ends in view are made use of. **As it is**—as we actually find in real life ; as it happens ordinarily. **Numerous instances**—a great many cases. **Abilities**—parts ; capacity for excelling. **Accomplish nothing**—fail to achieve distinction, or greatness. **Apt to vary &c.**—likely to form different opinions as to what Practical Wisdom consists in. **Particular failings**—special or individual shortcomings. [The meaning of the sentence may be illustrated thus : we observe one man, otherwise very able, but wanting in sympathy, fail in life, and we jump to the conclusion that practical wisdom lies in active sympathy with the opinions or passions of other men ; then again we observe another able man, who is very scrupulous and upright, unable to rise to distinction ; then we fancy that Practical Wisdom lies in avoiding nice scruples.] **Definite purpose**—well-marked aim ; distinct object. **Being constant**—sticking ; never letting it go, or losing sight of it. [This is what a man might conclude by studying the career of such men as Wilberforce, Rowland Hill and others who achieved fame by devoting all their energies throughout life to one object—such as the abolition of slavery, the establishment of penny postage, &c. The author disproves this view by showing that a man of intense and narrow selfishness has also one object in life always in view—*viz.* promoting his own little interests, and yet such a man cannot be said to possess Practical Wisdom, unless we take this in a very low sense.] **Constant enough** : for he never sacrifices his own interests, for the sake of his friend, or his country (he would not then be deeply selfish.) **Very likely** : assuming that the selfish man is not a fool, or very vain, but that he can form a pretty correct estimate of his own abilities, prospects &c. **Founded &c.**—based on extravagant ideas of what he is likely to attain. That is, what he looks forward to may be within the reach of an able man like himself if he sets about it in the right way. An able lawyer in England, for instance, may not unreasonably aspire to be the Lord Chancellor, to rise to

the Woolsack. [Compare the following passage in the author's *Friends in Council*, Vol I. :—"There is no doubt that energy acting upon a nature endowed with the qualities that we sum up in the word *cleverness*, and directed to a few clear purposes, produces a great effect, and may sometimes be mistaken for greatness. If a man is mainly bent upon his own advancement, it cuts many a difficult knot of policy for him, and gives a force and distinctness to his mode of going on which looks grand. The same happens if he has one pre-eminent idea of any kind, even though it should be a narrow one. Indeed success in life is mostly gained by unity of purpose ; whereas greatness often fails by reason of its having manifold purposes ; but it does not cease to be greatness on that accounts."]

**Small thing**—some petty object. **Close.....eyes**—engaging his thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. The metaphor is that of placing a small object so close to one's eyes as to shut out a view of everything else ; one's hand or even a finger, when brought near the pupil of the eye, may prevent him from seeing anything in heaven and earth. **As to his heart** : as that thing is close to his heart ; as it is very dear to him. That is, his desires are limited to that one object, and so are his thoughts—he is incapable of perceiving that there are other and nobler objects than the selfish aim he has in view. **Above it**—anything higher or nobler. **Beyond it**—any thing that is less near, more distant or remote (even though it be really greater.) He becomes short-sighted as it were ; a small present good is more to him than greater pleasures or truer happiness in the future. **Beside it**—the good of other men, for instance (to which also his petty selfishness blinds him.)

**Fail**—prove himself wanting, [This shows that the author does not regard petty selfish ambition as the proper object of Practical Wisdom ; we have been already told that Practical Wisdom consists in such a harmony amongst our faculties &c., as leads to the adoption of "*well-chosen* ends." This is one instance in which the author's view differs from that of narrow men of the world ; and it shows that in this essay *practical wisdom* does not mean merely worldly wisdom.]

**Summary of Para 3.** The author points out the error made by those who identify Practical Wisdom with the strength of some particular faculty &c. ; and who, finding an able man deficient in some respects, accomplishing nothing, at once conclude that Practical Wisdom means the absence of that deficiency ; what is most frequently mistaken for Practical Wisdom is definiteness and fixity of purpose ; this mistake is exposed by showing that the latter may be possessed by a man of narrow and deep selfishness, who may certainly attain his petty ends, but does not, on that account, deserve to be called a man of Practical Wisdom.

**Para 4. Imaginative**—of strong imagination. **Who have excess &c.**—whose imagination runs away with them, so to speak,



forgets the better of their reason. **General dwarfishness**—smallness of the body or the mind as a whole. **Accompanied by**—found in the same individual who has &c. **Disproportionate**—unduly large; abnormal. **Some part**; e. g. the head, hands and feet in a dwarf. [The analogy is brought out in the next sentence more clearly. The author means that just as in a dwarf, we find the body as a whole to be very short, while some members are ridiculously large; so the mental powers as a whole are likely to be weak in a man who possesses too much of imagination, or any other faculty.] **Devoured his stature**—grown at the expense of, or swallowed up his height, as it were, *i. e.* made him even smaller than he would otherwise have been (or rather made him look shorter than he is.) Applied to the “imaginative” man, the sentence means that the undue development of his imagination has stunted the growth of other faculties, and made him a sort of intellectual dwarf. **Of itself** (*in itself* is more generally used in this sense—in its very nature, —*per se*. **Is inconsistent**—interferes. **Is not founded &c.**—runs counters to, is not borne out by facts. The sentence means—It would be wrong to hold that a man of Practical Wisdom must be unimaginative, that to give play to one’s imagination is to be wanting in Practical Wisdom; for there are not wanting many instances of men who have both. **Who.....who**: This repetition of *who* is inelegant, and makes the sentence rather clumsy. The meaning is—(Of the men who have performed great deeds in the world, few have been wanting in strong imagination. [This sentence also shows that in the author’s opinion, only those who do “great things,” who are truly great, can be credited with Practical Wisdom. See note, preceding para.] **Subject to reason**—kept under the control of reason; *i. e.* prevented from going astray, or leading to extravagancies. **Its slave of the lamp**—the most powerful servant or auxiliary of reason, aids reason more effectively, enables it to work greater wonders, than anything else. For imagination enables one to realise clearly what cannot be directly observed—the past, the future, or what is absent; it thus supplies reason with the most valuable materials to exercise itself upon. The reference is to the story of “*Alladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*” in the *Arabian Nights’ Entertainments*, in which the “slave of the lamp” is the genie or demon summoned by rubbing the magic lamp, who raised a magnificent palace for Alladdin, and was ready to do whatever he was commanded to do by the possessor of the lamp. This genie is represented as more powerful than the “slave of the ring.” [On this subject Bacon has the following weighty remark: “It is true that the imagination is an agent or messenger in both provinces, both the judicial (*i. e. reason*) and the ministerial (=executive, *i. e. will, desires &c.*) For sense sendeth over to imagination before reason have judged: and reason sendeth over to imagination before the decree can be acted. For

imagination ever precedeth voluntary motion.....Neither is the imagination simply a messenger : for it was well said by Aristotle that *the mind hath over the body that commandment, which the lord hath over a bondman (=slave) ; but that reason hath over the imagination that commandment which a magistrate hath over a free citizen.*”—Advancement of Learning, Book II., xii.]

**Summary of para 4** :—Though imagination when allowed to run riot or grow extravagant, is certainly mischievous, it is a great mistake to fancy that in itself, it is incompatible with Practical Wisdom. On the contrary, few really great men have been without strong imagination, which enables one to achieve great things, when duly subordinated to reason.

**Para 5. Common error**—vulgar mistake ; a wrong notion held by many people. **Epicurean**—Easy-going ; given to avoiding scruples or anxious thought. What the author means by *Epicurean* is explained in what follows—“making no difficulties” “taking things &c.,” as the followers of the Greek philosopher Epicurus held that we should take life easily, live as merrily as possible, for life is short. [The author falls here, as well as elsewhere, into the “common error” of supposing the essence of the teaching of Epicurus to be “Eat, drink, and be merry” For a brief account of the doctrine of Epicurus, see note to last para of the Essay on *Aids to Contentment*. It may indeed be said, in defence of the author’s use of the word Epicurean, that the teaching of Epicurus was greatly corrupted and degraded by the later followers of his school, and that the word often has this signification.]

**In its nature** : that it is the very nature or essence of Practical Wisdom to be somewhat epicurean. **Makes no difficulties**—(i) raises no scruples ; is not very particular as to whether any measures or means proposed are fair or thorough. (ii) The phrase has been taken more literally by some commentators—‘rushes to action without seeking out difficulties.’ But (i) is preferable, as the phrase is often used in that sense, and because from what follows, it is clear that those *who make no difficulties* are opposed to conscientious, “scrutinising” people. **Takes.....come** : this means the same thing—takes things easy, asks no inconvenient questions ; is accommodating. **Getting rid**—disposing of in a perfunctory or careless manner ; getting the work off one’s hands. This is called *patching* below. **Completing**—doing it thoroughly, or effectively. **Troublesome**—difficult to get on with ; unmanageable. Some commentators take it to mean ‘painstaking’ ; but this is hardly admissible. The sentence means—Most people wrongly suppose that Practical Wisdom makes one easy-going, time-serving, content to do things perfunctorily to avoid friction or unpleasantness. [The author’s remark is a shrewd one, and very true ; but it is not difficult to account for the fact that people do indeed generally credit the kind of men described with the possession of Practical Wisdom. For

there are many worthy men who are very scrupulous and fond of applying strong remedies to old abuses, who would not listen to any compromise, and are generally so unmanageable, that others cannot and will not work with them; and being left without co-operation, they often end by doing nothing. Such men forget that the world cannot be made perfect all at once, and they are rightly deemed unpractical. Hence it comes to be generally thought that to have practical wisdom is to behave in just the contrary way—to have little scruples &c. This is an illustration of the process by which wrong notions come to prevail as to the nature of practical wisdom,—the process spoken of in para 3 of this essay—“we are apt to vary” &c.]

**Fancy**—wrong notion—the “common error” pointed out above). **Speculative**—unpractical; men of theory. **Searching**—(i) given to looking curiously into things; “scrutinizing.” (ii) Some paraphrase it by ‘thorough-going,’ ‘radical’; but this is rather loose, and hardly applicable; for in this sense a criticism or test is said to be *searching*, but not men, or the nature of men. **Small expedients**—Partial, or petty remedies; wretched shifts. This is explained by what follows—**Such devices &c.**—*i.e.* contrivances or artifices which instead of curing an evil merely keeps it out of sight. **Conceal &c.**—disguise or patch up what they cannot thoroughly mend or remove. The sentence means—This common error about Practical Wisdom makes those people thought unpractical who look closely into things, and who cannot be content with remedying things in a temporary make-shift way.

**To be practical**: if the word *practical* is wrongly defined (so as to be applied to men who do things in a careless fashion, so that soon afterwards others have to undo their work.) **Undo**—pull down; begin the work from the beginning. **Certainly**: I admit at once. **Scrutinizing**—inclined to probe or sift a thing to the bottom; given to examining closely or minutely. It is somewhat stronger than *searching*. **Painstaking**—ready to take any amount of trouble. The sentence means—Whether the kind of men above described are or are not practical, depends on the meaning given to that word. To say that searching, painstaking men are not practical, is to give a strange meaning to *practical*—to apply it to those who do things in a wretched, perfunctory way.

**Their nature**—what they cannot help doing. **Good open visible rent**—a big unmistakeable hole; a defect which no one can help observing. Such a hole is called *good* because there is no deceit about it, no likelihood of its escaping notice. **Time-serving patch**—what merely looks like a cure, or serves to close or conceal the rent, for the time being; ineffective temporary remedy. A *patch* is an ugly thing in a garment, and so *patch-work* is contemptuously used of a clumsy device for mending matters. The sentence means—These scrutinizing people

(wrongly called unpractical) are in their very nature averse to such ugly and imperfect means of remedying an evil ; they would much rather let the evil stand, that every one might see there is such an evil.

**I do not mean :** I admit that they may occasionally make use of temporary shifts to gain time. **Means of delay :** *i. e.* not as an effective means of remedying or removing the evil ; as enabling them to wait till better means can be adopted. The sentence means : These scrutinizing or painstaking people, when they adopt some such imperfect device, do so because the true remedy cannot be devised or adopted just then ; but they are never satisfied with any such expedients.

**Permit.....fancy**—lazily allow themselves to suppose ; flatter themselves. **Done a thing** (*done* is emphatic)—really accomplished the work. **Hit upon**—devised ; lighted upon. **Some expedient :** *viz.* a mode of patching. **Putting off the doing**—letting the matter stand over ; enabling them to defer the adoption of the true remedy. The sentence (which expands the thought in the preceding sentence) means : When such painstaking persons devise some means of gaining time till the work can be properly done, they do not foolishly imagine that they have really done it.

[**Summary** of para 5 : Practical wisdom is often attributed wrongly to men who are easy-going, while those who are of a searching nature are called unpractical. But it is a wrong use of the word *practical* to apply it to those who are content with petty make-shifts, and whose work is not thorough. The truly practical man should be of a scrutinizing disposition, never given to adopting temporary expedients, except as a means of gaining time for really effective measures.]

**Para 6. Bacon says :** in the *Advancement of Learning*. Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam and St. Albans (1561-1626) the great philosopher, essayist, and statesman in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. He rose to be Lord Chancellor, but was afterwards dismissed on the charge of having taken bribes.

[The extract here given is not from a single passage, but is really made up of two separate quotations—the first sentence, “In this..... lookers-on”, being from Book II. Ch. XX., and the remainder from Book I. Ch. V., of the *Advancement of Learning*. Helps perhaps quotes from memory, as the passages are here in a somewhat abbreviated form. The first sentence with the context stands thus ; “All the reasons which he (Aristotle) bringeth for the contemplative life are private, and respecting the pleasure and dignity of a man’s self—in which respects no question (=unquestionably) the contemplative life hath the pre-eminence ; not unlike to that comparison which Pythagoras made for the gracing and magnifying of philosophy and contemplation : who, being asked what he was, answered.—*That.....at the Olympian games,.....some came to try*



*their fortunes for the prizes, and some came as merchants to utter (= sell) their commodities, and some came to make good cheer and meet their friends, and some came to look on ; and that he was one of them that came to look on.* But men must know, that in this theatre of man's life it is reserved only for God and angels to be lookers-on". The second sentence occurs in a famous passage about "the mistaking or misplacing" of the ultimate end of knowledge :—"For men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite ; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight ; sometimes for ornament and reputation ; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction ; and most times for lucre and profession ; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason, to the benefit and use of men ; as if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit ; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect ; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon ; or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention ; or a shop for profit or sale ; and not a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate (=condition.) But this is that which will indeed dignify and exalt knowledge, if contemplation and action may be more nearly and straitly (=strictly) conjoined and united together than they have been ; a conjunction like unto that of the two highest planets, Saturn the planet of rest and contemplation, and Jupiter the planet of civil society and action." This is explained further on in the same para : *I do not mean when I speak of use and action, that end before mentioned of the applying of knowledge to lucre and profession.....But as both heaven and earth do conspire (=unite) and contribute to the use and benefit of man ; so the end ought to be from both philosophies to separate and reject vain speculations, and whatsoever is empty and void, to preserve and augment whatsoever is solid and fruitful.]*

**Theatre of man's life**—this world where men have to play their various parts,—i.e., to discharge the duties of their station. Compare the famous lines in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* :

"All the world's a stage  
And all the men women merely players, &c."

**Be lookers-on**—form the audience, or spectators. That is, no man has any right (by adopting a purely contemplative or philosopher's life) to remain spectators of the doings of others ; all men should be actors or workers. [In almost all ages and countries, the life of retirement and contemplation has been held up to admiration by philosophers and religious men as the highest kind of life. Bacon, who in this, as in so many other opinions, represents the modern spirit, decides against the majority of ancient philosophers, and asserts that a life in which contemplation is conjoined with action

is far superior to one of pure study and thought. It should be borne in mind, however, that it is in times of corruption and oppression, when it is extremely difficult for high-minded and cultured men to maintain themselves in power or high worldly position, that the idea comes to prevail that such men should keep themselves out of the world's strife and meanness, and live in peaceful retirement. At the same time, when such men always withdraw themselves from the world, there is a greater likelihood of the times growing worse and worse—power being then wielded exclusively by those who least deserve it. All this is well shown in Plato's *Republic* and in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*.]

**Contemplation**—deep study and thought ; pondering over the affairs of the world (as well as over the problems of philosophy, science, or religion.) It is not reverie or rapt religious meditation that is meant. **United**—combined (in the life of the individual.) **A conjunction &c.** And this combination of contemplation and action is like &c. *Conjunction* means in Astronomy the position of two planets when they appear in the same part of the heavens,—when a line from the earth to one of them would meet the other if produced. In Astrology (or *Phalita Jyotish*—which in Bacon's time was closely connected with Astronomy and was believed in by many people in Europe) the word was used of the meeting of two or more planets in the same sign of the Zodiac, or *Rasi*, when their *influences* were supposed to flow in the same direction (and so work more powerfully on the destinies of men than at other times.) **Like unto that**—which resembles the conjunction, or combined influence of &c. **Highest**—whose orbits are farthest (on the outside of the earth's orbit); the *superior* planets then supposed to be those most remote, (from the earth, which was looked upon as the fixed centre of the Universe,) the planets Uranus and Neptune not having been discovered till recently. **Planet of rest**: as its position in the heavens changes more slowly than that of any other planet (seen with the naked eye.) (i) This fact had of course its astrological significance ; and one born under the influence of Saturn was thought likely to be *saturnine* (*i. e.* morose or heavy and inactive) in disposition, as contrasted with *jovial* (*lit.* born under the influence of Jupiter.) (ii) In classical mythology again, the reign of Saturn (which preceded that of his son Jupiter who dethroned him) was represented as a time of tranquillity and happiness—a Golden Age. The extract may be explained thus: No man ought to remain a mere spectator in this world ; we have all our parts to play—the function of observing and judging of human actions belongs to God and the angels. It is exceedingly desirable that thought and deed should both find scope in our lives—that we should neither be philosophical hermits nor wholly absorbed in worldly occupations. [See the extract in italics given above on p. 104, which follows and explains the present passage.] **De-**

**lights in**—loves to bring about ; has at heart ; longs, or eagerly seeks, to promote. **On that account** : because Practical Wisdom is not content with a purely contemplative life—does not withdraw its possessor from the world of action. **Some men** : *viz.* those who despise the world, and think all contact with the world must be corrupting. These are the men who glory in mere negative virtue, for their highest moral ideal is purity and innocence. **Tinge of baseness**—an alloy or taint of low worldliness ; something degrading. This *baseness* lies in what is called *expediency* below. The sentence means—Practical Wisdom is fond of securing this combination of contemplation and action, which Bacon thinks so desirable ; and for this reason some austere moralists fancy that Practical Wisdom is rather worldly and base.

**Page 4. They do not know** : These strict moralists (who are quite ignorant of the world ) wrongly identify Practical Wisdom with expediency and therefore call it base. **Is as far**—differs quite as much ; is as much opposed to. **They term expediency**—they call adopting the convenient course (instead of the course which is just or morally right.) *Expediency* (used here in a bad sense) means seeking immediate advantage at the expense of one's principles ; choice of the safe or prudent course,—what is merely politic and not noble, or strictly just. **Impracticability**—the quality of being unmanageable ; rejecting all compromise, and sticking to what one believes to be right. Of course wisdom which is *practical* cannot make a man impossible to get on with, or unfitted to act with others ; but such wisdom, says the author, is equally opposed to low worldliness. The sentence (which is further cleared up in the next two sentences of the text) may be explained thus : Practical Wisdom does not lead a man to act according to mere worldly prudence, any more than it makes a man impracticable or quite unyielding ; on the contrary Practical Wisdom is the golden mean between these two extremes. This is what the moralists lose sight of, in despising Practical Wisdom as something mean or low.

**Compromise**—mutual concessions ; reconciliation or agreement effected by each party yielding to a certain extent. **They see** : The sentence means—in censuring Practical Wisdom as something base, all that the moralists clearly perceive is that in practical life nothing can be done without compromise,—without a readiness to give up a part of what one wishes or believes to be right, in order to come to an agreement with others ; for without such agreement nothing can be done.) [Take for instance the present Home Rule Bill (for Ireland) now passing through the House of Commons. The Gladstone ministry, who have brought forward the measure, are obliged to consent to various modifications of the Bill in committee, where several clauses and provisions are being rejected or altered in order to conciliate different sections of the party—that after all, the main provisions might become law. If the ministers on the

contrary, insisted on the original Bill being adopted without change, they would find themselves without a majority in favour of the measure, and would be obliged to withdraw the Bill, or perhaps resign on its being defeated.]

**At the same time &c.** The meaning of this difficult sentence is—These moralists look down upon all compromise as base, and believe that virtue is best preserved by inaction—by avoiding the trials and temptations of the world ; but this wrong,—compromise of the right kind, exercises our uprightness and thereby strengthens it ; for every time we make a compromise we have to see that we do not surrender our principles. **Do not perceive**—are blind to the fact. [Some commentators take *this compromise* to refer solely to compromise between action and inaction, and explain the whole sentence accordingly. But the context shows that it is the “compromise in all human affairs” that is spoken of.] **Nice limit**—the delicate or exact mean ; a middle course difficult exactly to hit or act upon. *Limit* is the boundary line, or line of demarcation. **Wilfulness**—obstinacy ; sticking to what one thinks proper without yielding in the least or minding the consequences ; “impracticability.” **Desertion...us**—throwing off the yoke of conscience, or our sense of duty ; abandoning our principles altogether—by yielding too readily or too far. [*Wilfulness* and *desertion* &c., are the two extremes, between which *compromise* ought to be the *nice limit*—the extremes which compromise of the right kind seeks equally to avoid.] **Of all others**—more than anything else, or any other course. The phrase may be taken as adv. to *requires*. **Diligent exercise**—carefully applying, or making use of. **Uprightness**—integrity ; rectitude. “*That uprightness*” does not refer to any particular kind of uprightness ; *that* is used simply because *which* &c. follows. **Which...peril**—which they think will be endangered (by contact with the world, by having to make any compromise at all.) These moralists hold that a man is not likely to remain strictly honest, if his honesty is repeatedly tried, as it must be when he takes part in worldly affairs, and has to make a compromise every now and then. **Persuade themselves**—make themselves believe ; are satisfied, or convinced. **Will...inactivity** : which is of course absurd. No part of our nature can grow, or even remain in a healthy state, without exercise.

\* [This is hardly fair to the moralists referred to, who prefer a retired life and regard it as more favourable to virtue, not because uprightness is “strengthened by inactivity,” but because, in their opinion, the world is not a proper place for the exercise or development of the highest virtues, the temptations of the world being too strong for most people. As Goldsmith says :—

“Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
And since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly.”

This opinion, however, as our author shows in the next sentence, is



not sound. Not only is it moral cowardice to shrink from putting one's uprightness in peril, but when one's virtue has not been strengthened by exercise, it is a feeble delicate thing, hardly worth having. Milton gives vigorous expression to this view :—

“I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered (=confined, like monks, in convents) virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race where the immortal garland is to be won, not without dust and heat.”—*Areopagitica*.

Macaulay's well-known words on the same subject also deserve to be quoted, though it might be objected, that the virtue wanted by the world is not the highest virtue :—

“The virtue which the world wants is a healthy virtue, not a valetudinarian virtue, a virtue which can expose itself to the risks inseparable from all spirited exertion, not a virtue which keeps out of the common air for fear of infection.” *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration*.

The argument in this sentence may be exhibited as a syllogism thus :

All diligent exercise of a virtue strengthens it ;  
Compromise is the diligent exercise of a virtue (*viz.* uprightness) ;  
∴ Compromise strengthens virtue. (*Barbara*). ]

**They fancy too :** Those who condemn Practical Wisdom as base fall into another error. **High moral resolves**—determination to follow lofty moral principles—or a high ideal of duty. **Great principles**—noble rules of conduct. **Not for daily use**—for holiday wear ; not meant to be practised in ordinary life. **And that :** Here *and* does not introduce a new statement, but simply an explanatory clause. This use of *and* is often met with in these *Essays*. **Room**—scope ; play ; opportunity (for the exercise of such principles &c.) **This life :** as (such people say) this life is too vile and corrupt. **Extreme delusion**—a monstrous error ; an entirely wrong view to take of the matter. **For how :** If high notions of duty are to be excluded from the affairs of the world, the world will really become, or will ever remain, the vile place it is said to be. **Mean little schemes**—petty selfish aims ; wretched expedients. **Some men :** Not the “some men” mentioned at the bottom of the last page (for those men are the moralists who despise Practical Wisdom) Here the reference is to narrow-minded men of the world. **Fondly**—foolishly. **Call practical :** compare “And if to be practical” &c., para 5. **Setting ..another**—trying to remedy an evil by bringing in something equally (or more) mischievous. [An evil should be removed or eradicated, and not be superseded by a second evil. If, for instance, to discourage vice, power be given to policemen to enter any house and examine the habits of the inmates, such a power may be grossly abused and may cause greater evils. Or if, to prevent newspaper writers from unjustly attacking or abusing other people, the liberty of the press be taken away, the remedy would be worse than the disease.] **Counteract**—

neutralise ; oppose ; cope with. **Those principles** : *i.e.* higher principles. **As theories**—as quite unpractical ; to be inapplicable in real life. [Thus in a country, where the practice of bribing officials has long been current, any plan to put a stop to it (by appointing better men, giving much higher salaries &c.) would at first be laughed at as quite impracticable.] **Acknowledged**—recognized (as right principles.) **Common**—familiar. [The sentence means—The world can only be improved by bringing in higher principles,—not by petty expedients or combating one evil with another. These principles are sure to be ridiculed as unpractical at first, but will come to be fully accepted by and by.]

**Are practical men** : *are* is emphatic. The author implies that such men are not likely to be *called* practical at the time, but are generally looked down upon as speculative men or visionaries. **Practices**—rules actually followed, or acted upon. **Create**—give rise to. **Come into being**—be born ; start into existence. **Founders**—authors ; *i.e.* those who bring in the fruitful principles. [The sentence means—Those who bring higher principle to bear upon the affairs of life, may not often live to see such principles widely accepted as practical rules governing the conduct of men ; but such men are truly practical men, though not generally recognised as such.]

[The contents of the Essay may be summed up thus : Practical Wisdom makes a complete man—the best type of a man of the world—who does much, and does everything as well as it can be done.]

## ESSAY II.

### AIDS TO CONTENTMENT.

SUBSTANCE of the paragraphs :

1-2. Remedies against the various ways in which men make themselves unhappy. (*i*) No unmixed good exists ; (*ii*) self-reproach for past decisions is generally wrong.

3. *Oversensitiveness* should be blunted ; (*i*) the remarks of others one often besides the mark ; (*ii*) they may not say anything at all ; (*iii*) it is better to imagine that their remarks are favourable.

4. Consolation in real *calumny* : (*i*) If you are innocent, it does not touch you, as it then concerns an imaginary being ; (*ii*) do not exaggerate the harm done ; (*iii*) you may by frankness prevent it from being believed in by your family and friends ; (*iv*) to complain about it is neither wise nor seemly.

5-6. For supposed *ingratitude* : (*i*) do not exaggerate the service done, or expect too much gratitude ; (*ii*) Gratitude cannot always rouse affection.

**7-8.** For *imperfect appreciation* : (i) Men are generally absorbed in their own affairs ; (ii) Praise without true appreciation is satirical ; (iii) most men either have no opportunities, or are incompetent, to estimate you fairly ; (iv) the few who can, probably do estimate you fairly ; (v) the natural longing for sympathy and approbation should be checked, and higher motives kept in view.

**9.** Habit of *mistrust* in friendship &c. arises either from diffidence or from selfishness ; the former often makes one more amiable, but the latter should be rooted out, as far as possible.

**10** *Want of truth* : do not make yourself miserable by trying to appear other than what you are.

**11-2.** *Apathy or weariness* : cultivate your tastes and sympathies, to keep yourself agreeably employed in the intervals of life, and to avoid the "idleness of the heart."

**13.** Expectation of *perfect success* : (i) do not attach too much importance to, or feel too anxious for, the affairs of life ; (ii) the thought of death and future life often increases one's enjoyment of the present.

**14-5.** *Real griefs* : (i) Sorrow is not to be indulged in while anything can be done to avert it ; (ii) it does not justify neglect of one's duties ; (iii) it is the lot, trial and privilege of man ; (iv) to cope with it effectively a Christian should rely on his faith in God—as the ancient pagan philosophers recognised Necessity.]

**Aids &c.**—Considerations that might make us more contented—enable us to bear calmly the vexations and trials of life.

**Para 1.** **Suggest**—propose briefly. **Antidotes** (*lit.* what is given against something,—a specific or remedy for a poison)—preventives ; means of protection ; what might keep men from &c. **Manifold**—exhibited in various forms. **Ingenuity**—cleverness ; subtlety. **Self-tormenting**—torturing one's own self ; making oneself miserable. [The sentence means—I am going in the first place to show how to prevent people from making themselves miserable in various ingenious or clever ways—as they so often do.]

**Para 2.** **Fretting**—discontent ; irritation ; ill-humour. **Conviction**—full belief. **Unmixed**—pure ; unalloyed ; without drawback. As the proverb says : "There is no rose without its thorns." **The sentence means**—A great amount of peevish ill-humour might be escaped from, if people did not expect perfect success or happiness—a thing that does not exist in this world.]

**Free**—unfettered ; not through the pressure of any one else ; what one was not driven or bound to adopt. The *choice* meant is the adoption of some occupation or profession, which a man was not forced by circumstances or his parents &c. to choose. **Contrives**—manages. This is an instance of the "ingenuity of self-tormenting." **Blaming &c.**—finding fault with the decision he made ; thinking he made a great mistake in choosing that course.

**Judgment**—discernment ; power of deciding correctly. [The sentence means—It is because we do not know that all worldly happiness is imperfect, that many of us bring ourselves to think we adopted a wrong course, though nobody forced us to take that course at the time. Or put it thus :—We choose a certain course by the exercise of our own judgment, and we find it does not turn out so well as we expected ; we then reproach ourselves with having made a bad choice ; but in doing so we forget that nothing is absolutely good in this world.]

**Blue and green**—two particular colours—*i. e.* two courses neither of which was perfect. **Put before**—offered to ; open to, or allowed him to choose from. **Dissatisfied &c.**—inclined or disposed to blame himself. **Omitted**—neglected. **Pure white**—*i. e.* the absolutely best course. [The sentence means—when a man decides to adopt a certain course, he may have but two courses open to him, each of which has its advantages as well as disadvantages ; but afterwards he forgets this, and reproaches himself for not having chosen the ideally best course—though his choice may have been really the best under the circumstances.]

**Shenstone** : William Shenstone (1714-63) a poet and essayist, best known for his *Pastoral Ballad*, his poem named *the School-mistress*, and his *Essays on Men and Manners*, from which the present extract is taken. **Worked out**—described in detail ; given a full account of ; shown the different steps of. **Process**—mode of thinking, or course of thought (in such acts of self-reproach for supposed error in choice.) **With fidelity**—faithfully ; very accurately ; just as it really takes place.

**In suspense**—doubtful ; in a state of hesitation or uncertainty ; unable to see at once which course is preferable. *Suspense* is from *L. pendo*=I hang, and means, *lit.* 'hanging under,' hence 'staying in a state of uncertainty.' **Betwixt.....of**—in choosing or deciding between ; when we have before us various courses one of which we must take. **Pursuit**—occupations ; careers. **Doubtingly**—with some misgivings ; not feeling certain that the choice is a prudent one. **Unconquered hankering**—longing which we cannot subdue or get rid of. **After the other**—towards the course we have rejected. That is, though we decide one way, feeling that to be on the whole the best, we cannot overcome the feeling that the pursuit we have refused to follow would have made us happier. [Thus 'suppose a young graduate works for some time as a teacher, and at the same time qualifies himself for the legal profession. Finding that he must content himself with a small income all his life if he continues to be a teacher, he makes up his mind to give up his post and join the bar. But though he does so, he cannot help feeling that the work of a teacher is congenial to him, and such life would have been a quiet and peaceful one, though with but small earnings.] **Scheme**—plan



(of life) ; pursuit. **Answer**—fulfil ; come up to ; correspond to. **But indifferently**—rather poorly ; only in an imperfect manner ; not at all satisfactorily. **Most.....will**—as nearly every scheme in this world does ; because hardly anything turns out quite so satisfactory as was expected at first. **Compare** :—

“The best-laid schemes o’ mice and men  
Gang (=Go) oft agley”—Burns, *To a Mouse*.

**Will** (contraction for “will answer.....indifferently”)—are sure to do. **Repent &c.**—regret the decision we came to. **Immediately.....decline**—at once imagine the courses we have rejected to be charming ; conceive without further reflection that we would have been happy in some other walk or career in life. **Heightens**—intensifies ; aggravates. **Uneasiness**—discontent. The word is used in a stronger sense than it generally has. [This sentence means—Finding that we are much less happy than we expected, we reproach ourselves with having chosen the wrong course, and fancy that the courses we refused to take would have made us happier ; this thought makes us still more unhappy.] **We might.....it.** If we cannot help the results of our choice from being disappointing, we can at any rate avoid making the disappointment more bitter in this way ; *i. e.* we ought not to add needlessly to our unhappiness by wrongly imagining the rejected courses to be preferable. **Escape** : by calmly reflecting on the matter ; by not indulging in foolish regrets. **Aggravation**—making more painful ; heightening. **It**—stands for *uneasiness*.

**Not improbable**—likely enough. **We had been** : *had* = *would* or *should have*, a use common in older English, and still met with in poetry. [The sentence means—If we had chosen some other course, we might have been more miserable ; and it is nearly certain that we should not have been less miserable.]

[Substance of the extract from Shenstone : It often happens that after hesitating long between two courses, we adopt one, but continue to feel a secret and strong inclination towards the course rejected. As worldly affairs seldom turn out quite successful, we often fail to be satisfied with our happiness in the course we have chosen ; and then we needlessly increase our unhappiness by fancying that if we had chosen the other course, we should have been quite happy. It is very unlikely that such should have been the case,—it being more likely that we would have been still less happy in the pursuit we rejected.]

**Para 3. Discomfort**—uneasiness ; discontent. **Oversensitiveness**—disposition to take things too much to heart ; extreme delicacy of feeling. [The sentence means—If you are too sensitive to, or too easily hurt by, the criticisms of others on yourself or your doings, you are sure to make yourself miserable.]

**This requires** :—It is necessary to grow more callous, or less sensitive, about &c. ; you should train yourself to care less about

such criticisms. **Much connection with**—any real influence on ; a great deal to do with. [The sentence means—‘You should think that their remarks will generally be beside the purpose, or will hardly be much affected by your actions.’ The author suggests this to blunt our oversensitiveness ; his reasoning is this : Since nothing you can do will have much effect on the remarks of others why should their remarks have so much effect on you—why should you mind the remarks so much ?—See para 7, “People in general will not look about” &c.]

**It may.....you**—It is not certain,—it is hardly likely—that they will make any remarks, good or evil, about you. **Amphitheatre** (Gr *amphi*=on both sides,—for the original amphitheatre was literally a moveable double theatre, the two halves of which could be placed either back to back, or face to face, forming in the latter case a complete circle or ellipse round the arena as in an ordinary amphitheatre)—hence, great theatre. The Amphitheatre at Rome—the Coliseum—could accomodate eighty thousand spectators. **Assembled world &c.**—with the eyes of the whole world fixed on them. **Are playing.....benches**—have nobody to observe what they do. [The sentence means—‘Many people makes themselves miserable by fancying that all the world is observing what they do, noting their defects, and criticising them ; but in reality they are hardly noticed by the world.’ It is of course through foolish vanity that they make this unfortunate mistake.] On this subject Helps says elsewhere : “Perhaps not all the self-inflicted tortures of religious devotees have equalled *the misery which men have given themselves up to, from remarks of their own about themselves, and imaginary remarks on their conduct by their neighbours.*”—(*Friends in Council*, B II. ch II.)

**Particular theme**—special subject of conversation. **Passer-by**—casual observer. **Must listen.....themselves**—cannot help fancying that other people talk about them. **Defy**—disprove ; prove themselves to be exceptions to. **Proverb** : that “**Listeners hear no good of themselves**” ; that is eavesdroppers—men who stealthily listen to other people’s conversations—are punished by hearing themselves ill-spoken of. [The proverb is a shrewd one, and is often found true ; because it is the mean-souled suspicious persons, who have good reason to suppose that they are thought ill of by others, that try to listen at key-holes, or catch stealthily the words of others ; and it is likely enough that what they do hear by such means proves to be by no means agreeable to them.] **And insist &c.** (*And* is here explanatory, for the last clause explains the preceding one, shows how the proverb is to be defied) —They might resolve to hear themselves praised—and not criticised unfavourably, as they are foolishly in the habit of fancying. This will enable them to be happy inspite of the proverb (about the fate of listeners.) [The sentence means—The best course is

to fancy that they are not the subject of other people's remarks ; but if they do indulge in any fancies on that subject, let them fancy that they are *well* spoken of, for that will give them pleasure. Why should they torment themselves by imagining that people speak *ill* of them ?]

**Para 4. Well.....suppose**—Take the contrary case ; let it be admitted, in the next place. **It is no fancy**—it is true that you are spoken ill of ; it is not an imaginary grievance. **It** refers to the thought of the preceding para (*viz.* supposed censure of others) not to any particular noun. **And that :** here also *and* is explanatory, equiv. to *namely*. **You really.....obloquy**—it is a fact that people censure your conduct unjustly, or declaim against you without any just cause. **Unmerited**—undeserved. **Obloquy** (*lit.*, speaking against)—calumny ; reproach or odium. **What then :** that does not matter much.—The answer implied is negative. **It.....well said**—it is a very apt remark. **In that case :** if the censure is unmerited. **Abuse.....touch you**—the censure is one that does not concern you at all, *i. e.* it is not the real *you* against whom the censure is directed, but some imaginary person with whom people foolishly identify yourself ; you are so very different from what they think you to be, that it is, you may say, against another creature that their remarks are made. [This idea is developed in the author's work, *Companions of my Solitude* : “By way of comfort in bearing calumny, it may be observed that there is rarely any such thing as a system of active well-regulated, well-aimed calumny, arising out of malice prepense ; but that far more often *it has its source in honest ignorance, mean-mindedness, or absolute mistake.....*The sufferers from injurious and unjust comment might treat the whole thing as one which *lacked reality*. The blame itself is often good enough, having an appearance of justice, *but withal no foundation in real circumstances—so that it is only good, if you may so, in a literary sense, as good fiction, but having no ground in real life.* How little ought a thoughtful to be long vexed at such stuff, *immaterial* in every sense.”—Ch. x ] **And if :** Here also *and* does not introduce anything new, but merely a clearer form of the same remark. **Guiltless**—not really to blame. **It ought not &c.** (*It* refers to *abuse*)—You ought to be as little offended or wounded by such censure, as if the abuse were against somebody else whom you do not know at all.

**May answer :** To the above suggestion—that you should not mind unjust censure which is not against *you*, but what you are wrongly supposed to be. **By those...welfare**—by men whose esteem you cannot do without—for instance, such false charges might injure you in the opinion of your superiors if you are in service, and might hinder your promotion &c. ; and if you are a professional man your clients, patients, or customers may be prejudiced against you. [The sentence means—you may say that though false, such abuse

may be credited by those on your good opinion your success in life depends.]

**Palpable** (*lit.* what may be felt)—unmistakeable ; substantial. **Bearing up against**—enduring (without being depressed) not allowing yourself to be crushed by. **Just estimate** &c.—correct idea as to what the precise injury is, and how far you are really injured. That is, do not exaggerate the injury done. This is further explained in the next two or three sentences. [The sentence means—If the calumny is credited by your superiors &c., the harm done is certainly real ; but even in that case, you should try to make out correctly in what way and how far you are injured ; that will generally enable you to bear it with composure.] **Measure**—guage ; estimate. **Worldly harm**—injury in relation to success in life. [ So in his *Friends in Council*, B. II., Helps says : “The main comfort under injurious comment of any kind is to look at them fairly, accept them as an evil, and *calculate the extent of the mischief. These injurious comments seldom blacken all creation for you.*” ] **Conjure up**—raise up, as by enchantment, or magic. Imagination is often likened to a magician, who is supposed capable of summoning various shapes and\* spirits by his black art. *Conjure* in this sense is accented on the first syl. ; when it is accented on the 2nd Syl., it means ‘solemnly request or implore.’ **All manner**—a great variety. **Apparitions**—shapes ; phantoms ; *i.e.* unreal appearances. *Scorn*—disdain (on the part of other men.) **Universal hissing**—disapprobation or disgust on the part of all men. *Hissing* is a mark of extreme dislike. In the *Essay* above quoted from, the author also observes, “The opinion which annoys you so much, is frequently that of one or few.” [ The sentence means—Do not torment yourself by imagining that all men are pointing the finger of scorn at you, treating you with contempt, or showing marked disapprobation in other ways. For it often happens that it is only the good opinion of a small number of people that you really lose in such cases. ]

**It...fault**—You are yourself to blame to a certain extent (because probably you are not candid enough to your friends and relatives, and so they fail to understand you, and do not at once disbelieve any evil thing said of you, as they would otherwise have done.) **Who ought &c.** “Your particular friends and relations” ( *Companions of my Solitude* ). **In whose...live**—whose love is of supreme importance to you, without which life becomes unbearable to you. **That should be** : *i.e.* you should make it ; if you are not too reserved, it must be &c. **Circle**—charmed circle ; an inner group, or select number of people surrounding you. The family circle is especially meant. **Poisoned dart**—envenomed shaft of malice ; stroke of calumny. **Can reach you** : the metaphor is that of a man surrounded by a close band of faithful followers, through whom no darts shot by the enemy can reach him. [ This point may



be illustrated by a story which the author tells in the *Friends in Council* B. II : "A humorous friend of mine who suffered sometime ago under a severe article in the first newspaper in the world, tells me that he thought all eyes were turned upon him—he being a retired, quiet, fastidious person,—but going into his nursery and finding his children were the same to him as usual,.....he began to discover that there was *happily a public very near and dear to him*, in which even the articles of the *Times* could make no impression."]

**The rest**—outside world ; the public (who have but imperfect opportunities of knowing you.) **Estimation**—opinion. **Simply** .....**ill fortune**—merely a stroke of ill-luck. [In his *Comp. of my Solitude* the author observes that it is no great misfortune—"None of the great teachers have taught us, that to be reviled is any signal misfortune." And elsewhere in the same book he has the following weighty observation : "Such a thing is to be looked upon as a pure misfortune coming in the ordinary course of events. The way of treating it, is to deal with it as calmly and philosophically as with any other misfortune. As some one has said, *the mud will rub off when it is dry, and not before*. It is not wise to be very impatient to justify one's self ; and altogether too much stress should not be laid upon calumny by the caluminated, else their serious work will be for ever interrupted ; and they should remember that it is not so much their business to explain to others all they do, as to be sure that it will bear explanation and satisfy themselves."] **Neither wise** : See above extract. **Decorous**—decent. It is unseemly to complain too much of calumny, and is hardly consistent with dignity. [As Holmes says of controversy, that "it equalises wise men and fools, and the fools know this" and compares this to the hydrostatic paradox ; so in trying to answer calumny, or resenting it, a man brings himself down to the level of those who indulge in abuse—the latter being gratified too on finding that their attack has been effective.]

The author's **advice in Para 4** may be summed up thus : (1) Treat real calumny as unreal, directed against some one else ; (2) estimate the real injury done, and do not fancy that all the world is laughing or hissing at you ; (3) take care that those near and dear to you do not believe in the calumny ; 4) preserve a wise and dignified silence.

**Para 5. A little &c.** If you would only think a little, you will not feel disappointed at finding that those whom you have benefited are not so grateful as you expected them to be. [It is only through thoughtlessness, or inability to look at a thing from another's point of view, that we expect too much gratitude, and are dissatisfied with what we do get.] **If you were only &c.**—If you expect gratitude in proportion to the amount (or degree) of kindness you have really shown (*i. e.* the amount of sacrifice or personal inconvenience you have suffered in conferring the benefit —

you would rarely have to think people guilty of ungratitude.\* That is, if you expect no more gratitude than your service would naturally call forth, you will generally feel satisfied with what you do receive ; or—do not exaggerate your service, and you will be contented with the gratitude for it. **Expended**—shown at your own cost, by subjecting yourself either to pecuniary loss, or to personal trouble. **But many persons** : Instead of calmly weighing the amount of good-will they have shown, many persons are given to attaching a fancy price to any deeds of kindness they have done ; and so it is very unlikely that they should meet with the degree of gratitude which would satisfy them ; though what they do get may not fall short of what is really due to them. Or—many people exaggerate the merit of their kindness and expect too much gratitude, and so they are naturally disappointed even on meeting with the proper measure of gratitude. **Factitious**—*not* what is *made* or manufactured ; hence, artificial, unduly high. **In return**—as a reward, or equivalent ; in exchange (for the favour shown.) **Which however** : *which* refers to “what they.....return.”

[In this paragraph, the author warns people against setting an excessive value on their own favours, and “looking for more gratitude than they deserve.”]

**Para 6. Besides, it is &c.** It should also be borne in mind, that people constantly make the mistake of looking for an impossible return for favour or kindness shown ;—they want to be treated as only those who love them can treat them ; they forget that affection cannot be bought by any amount of mere favours. Or—people are often disappointed with the result of their benevolence, because they expect to be rewarded with the love of the recipient of their favours—and this is a very unreasonable expectation on their part. **What affection &c.**—the proofs of deep attachment (*e. g.* reciprocating the good offices, showing a preference for the benefactor’s company.) [On the subject of expecting love, Helps makes the following observations in his excellent Essay on *Unreasonable Claims in Social Affections* : “Amongst the unreasonable views of the affections, the most absurd one has been the fancy that love depends entirely on the will ; still more that the love of others for us is to be guided by the inducements which seem probable to us. We have served them ; we think only of them ; we are their lovers, or fathers, or brothers ; we deserve and require to be loved and to have the love proved to us. But love is not like property ; it has neither duties nor rights. You argue for it in vain ; and there is no one can *give* it you. It is not his or hers to give. Millions of bribes and arguments cannot prevail. It is not a substance but a relation. There is no royal road. We are loved as we are loveable to the person loving.” And elsewhere in the same essay he says : “To begin with ingratitude. Human beings seldom have the demands upon each other which they imagine. *And for what they have done they*

*frequently ask an impossible return.* Moreover, when people have really done others a service, the persons benefited often do not understand it. Could they have understood it, the benefactor perhaps, would not have had to perform it. You cannot expect gratitude from them in proportion to your enlightenment. *Then, again, where the service is a palpable one, thoroughly understood, we often require that the gratitude for it should bear down all the rest of the man's character.* The dog is the very emblem of faithfulness ; yet, I believe, it is found that he will sometimes like the person who takes him out and amuses him, more than the person who feeds him. So amongst bipeds, *the most solid service must sometimes give way to the claims of congeniality.* Human creatures, are, happily, not to be swayed by self-interest alone : they are many-sided creatures ; there are numberless modes of attaching their affections. Not only like likes like, but unlike likes unlike." (*Friends in Council*, Book I.) The above extracts show clearly how unreasonable it is "to expect from gratitude what affection alone can give."]

**Para 7. Topics** (Gr. *Topika*, the name of a work by Aristotle, from *topos*--place ; it originally meant a commonplace, a general maxim regarded as of use in argument)—points ; or familiar truths. **As much esteemed**—thought as highly of. **You may begin** : In the first place, you should observe that the ordinary run of men are not likely to take any pains to discover the worth of a person, or speak highly of anything that does not directly meet their eyes. That is, most people notice or admire such merit only as they cannot help observing—they never take much trouble to ascertain who are really deserving. **Look about for**—go out of their way to seek for or find out. **Come.....way**—present itself before them unsought ; fall within their cognizance. [In his *Friends in Council*, Bk. I. Sir Arthur Helps observes : "A man feels that he has abilities or talents of a particular kind, that he has shown them, and still he is a neglected man. *I am far from saying that merit is sufficiently looked out for ;* but a man may take the sting out of any neglect of his merits by thinking that at least it does not arise from malice pre-pense, as he almost imagines in his anger. *Neither the public, nor individuals, have the time, or will, resolutely to neglect anybody. What pleases us we admire and further ; if a man in any profession or art, does things which are beyond us, we are as guiltless of neglecting him as the Caffres are of neglecting the Differential Calculus.* .....The merit is oftentimes not understood. Be it ever so manifest, it cannot absorb men's attention." ] **You may consider.....merits** : In the second place, you should reflect that such praise as does not depend on a true recognition of your worth, would be sarcastic—a mere mockery. Or, if any one praises you without really knowing what he praises you for, there is a sort of unreality about such praise, which makes it ironical, and which should therefore be distasteful,

if not offensive, to a sensible man. **Satirical**—not sincere ; of the nature of satire, or veiled censure—for it would be merely expressed in order to humour or flatter you, and would imply that you are vain enough to care for such valueless praise ; cf.—

“Praise undeserved is scandal in disguise” —

Pope's *Epistles* I. Bk II. (borrowed from an earlier poet.)

**Just appreciation**—Correct perception and estimate ; recognising the real value. **You may reflect** .....**about you** : In the third place, you should consider that only a small number of men can be in a position to estimate you at your real worth. (It is implied that since most people have no such opportunity, their praise would be satirical ; and so praise should not be eagerly expected) **You may then**... **...matters** : In the fourth place, you ought to consider that even of those few who have the opportunity, few only are men of sound judgment, men whose opinions in other subjects would have much weight with you. That is, fewer still are there whose views you would choose to be guided by in other concerns of life (and why should you care then for their opinions about you?) **Go further**—carry this reasoning another step ;—try to realise yet more clearly how little you should care for praise. **And think** ; *And* introduces an explanation (a very common use in these Essays)—shows what this “going further” is. **And you**.....**hear it** : Lastly, you should imagine that these few (who have sufficient opportunity as well as judgment) have really formed a just opinion of your merits, or deservings, though their opinion may not come to your knowledge. See para 3—“They might defy the proverb &c.” **Conclude** : intr., or obj. ‘this series of reflections.’) **Fairly**—impartially ; justly ; as you deserve. **Hear it** : *It* refers to “that such persons &c.”—the fact of his being appreciated. It is because it may not be heard, that the author wants it to be *imagined*. [In this paragraph, to console one who is imperfectly appreciated, it is suggested : (1) that people do not inquire about the merits of others ; (2) that without true appreciation, praise is satirical ; (3) that few have the opportunity, and (4) still fewer the ability, to form a just estimate ; (5) that it may be imagined these last do form such estimate.]

In his *Companions of my Solitude*, Helps says : “In bearing neglect, the next evil to calumny, many aids may be given to those who will be content to take them. No doubt neglect is hard to bear for one who feels he ought not to be neglected. But where this is justly felt, the neglect may generally be traced up to some source which is not necessarily a painful one. A man will not condescend to use some means (*e. g.* flattery), and yet would have what those means alone, or best, can give him ; or he insists upon possessing that which could hardly be got except with the aid of certain advantages joined to merits—which advantages Nature or

Fortune has denied him. Having one stout friend (as Bacon has noticed) what will it not do for a man? There are certain things he cannot say for himself. .... You often hear a man making the somewhat simple complaint, that he only wants justice. *Only* justice! why, justice requires time, insight and goodness. .... He is on earth: and men are unjust to him. How ludicrous the complaint!"

**Para 8. Seeks for sympathy**—yearns for the approbation of his fellows; longs that others should think well of his actions and character. **And each ....labours**: and so we all naturally long for an appreciation of the abilities we possess, and the pains we take in any matter. **Craves**—*it*. is hungry for; eagerly seeks. **But this ....us**. But though this desire is natural, it is liable to run to excess, it may carry us too far; we should therefore keep it under restraint, by steadily bearing in mind how unworthy or low the feeling is, or by fixing our thoughts on the other and nobler springs of action by which we should be guided or animated. The author means that the desire of esteem is not an improper one in itself; but it grows into a disease if not restrained; and that we should therefore restrain it by the thought that it is not a thing to be highly valued, that there are higher feelings which should be adopted as principles of action. **Its vanity**: this craving is called vain, (*i*) because it (or rather its object—the recognition &c.) is earthy or worldly, and all earthly things are vain or empty; (*ii*) or because it implies too high an estimate of our own importance. The first is preferable. **Higher motives**—*e. g.* devotion to duty, obedience to the commands of God, desire to promote the welfare of men, &c. **Actuate**—operate on; prompt our actions. **That man .... exertion**: He who fancies a man's deserts depend solely on popular opinion, and who looks chiefly to the loud approval of other men as the reward of his labours, must be in a rather bad way as regards his moral condition—for it can hardly be that he has a high sense of duty. **Pitiable**—miserable; truly deplorable. **Moral sickness**—unsound moral constitution, want of strong principles; unhealthy condition of the soul. (Because such a man is capable of doing many wrong or mean actions to gratify popular passions—he is a coward, wanting in moral courage.) **The test**: the only pass-port; who thinks merit solely depends on securing the esteem of one's fellows. **Their applause** &c.—who is insensible to all other influences except popularity; with whom the noisy approval of the multitude is the one object worth striving for. **Exertion**—putting forth his powers.

**Para 9. A habit**: Some persons suffer from constant suspicion (that they are not sufficiently loved.) **Taints**—infects; vitiates; renders morbid or unhealthy. (This is shown below.) It prevents them from being happy with those whom they love &c. **They take up**: Such suspicious people notice seriously, or are offended by,



trifles : very slight circumstances are enough to disturb them. [In an Essay on Education in the *Friends in Council*, the author censures this concern for trifles, and imputes it to bad education—to the painful exactness of modern life, to the disproportionate care for little things manifested by parents and guardians, especially in the criticisms on others that a child constantly hears &c. “These ways teach children in their turn to be querulous, sensitive, and full of small cares and wishes. And when you have made a child like this, can you make a world for him that will satisfy him?.....One who does so care, has a garment embroidered with hooks, which catches at everything that passes by. He finds many more causes of offence than other men ; and each offence is a more bitter thing to him than to others. Poor man ! He goes through life wondering that he is the subject of general attack, and that the world is so quarrelsome.”] **They expect** : These exacting people think their friends should always behave in exactly the same manner ; and this is expecting more than the nature of men makes possible. **Same aspect**—unchanged friendly warmth ; as affectionate an intimacy as ever. [On a somewhat similar topic, *viz.* broken friendship, our author says elsewhere : “Friendship is often outgrown : and his former child’s clothes will no more fit a man than some of his former friendships. Often a breach of friendship is supposed to occur, when there is nothing of the kind. People see one another seldom ; their courses in life are different ; they meet, and their intercourse is constrained, they fancy that their friendship is mightily cooled... They cannot expect that their friends will pass into new systems of thought and action without new ties of all kinds being created, and some modification of the old ones taking place.”] **They try.....loved** : such exacting people make artificial trials or tests, by which to make out whether the affection towards them is warm enough. **Watch narrowly**—observe closely or minutely. **Effects of absence**—whether separation serves to cool the intimacy at all, or whether those whom they love are as much pained by the separation as they expect. **And require.....before**—and they want their friends to show that the warmth of their attachment has not diminished in the least—is as strong as ever. **Footing**—level ; standing. **Acquire.....ways**—get into this habit of mistrust. **Natural**—inherent ; belonging to their character. **Diffidence &c.**—misgiving as to their own worth ; distrust of their own power of arousing and keeping up the esteem and affection of others. **For which.....more** : and this diffidence makes them sometimes more amiable ; their friends may come to love them the more for this anxiety and mistrust. **And they might &c.**—And if such people could feel sure that their modesty or gentleness makes them more loveable, they might feel sufficiently relieved or gratified. **If they could** : It is implied that unfortunately they cannot feel sure of this as a rule, but fancy that the display of such weak-

ness makes them ridiculous, and are ashamed of displaying it. **Ample comfort**—good reason to be satisfied—to have their mistrust removed. **With others.....satisfied**—And there are other suspicious persons, whose desire to monopolise selfishly the time and affection of their friends causes them to behave in this way. They are exacting because they cannot bear that their friends should love others, or have other matters to attend to. **Cannot be satisfied**—is insatiable. **And their.....soothe** : Such people should strive to eradicate this selfishness, instead of seeking to gratify or indulge it. (For the more they indulge the habit, the more intolerably selfish are they sure to grow.) **Uproot**—root out ; do away with ; radically cure. **Soothe** : by getting their friends to prove that the attachment is as strong as ever &c.

**Para 10. Contentment.....truth.**—You cannot be contented unless you are free from affectation. **Abides with**—is inseparable from ; is always found along with. [It is not quite clear whether the author intends to say (i) that all contented men have truth, or (ii) that all who have truth are contented ; though the former seems preferable, because the next sentence conveys (i).] **And you.....learned** : If you want to seem richer &c. than you are, you will seldom escape the penalty—you are pretty sure to be placed in a very awkward or uncomfortable position. **Appear &c.**—pass for what you are not ; give yourself airs of superiority of any kind that you do not really possess. **Richer** : By appearing richer, you are liable to incur greater expenses (in order to keep up the reputation for wealth) than you can well afford. **Greater**—more powerful, or of a higher rank and influence. By appearing greater than you are, you are likely to be troubled by place-hunters, and men who expect all manner of favours, whose expectations you are unable to satisfy, and for whom you may have to promise to do more than you can do. **More learned** : The inconvenience of appearing more learned than you are, is that you have to be constantly on your guard not to expose your ignorance, to suffer from constant anxiety on that account, for you will be applied to for information on many points, which you are unable to supply. **The mask** :—If you wear a mask, it becomes very oppressive and intolerable after a time ; that is, it is very painful to keep up or sustain a character not really one's own. [This is an aphorism or pithy saying, summing up the thought of this para. It has been well said, *Try to be what you would seem.* And on the inconvenience of seeming to be what one is not, the author says elsewhere—“A complete being might deceive with wonderful effect ;.....a very close vulpine nature—all eyes, all ears—may succeed better in deceit. But it is a sleepless business. Yet strange to say, it is had recourse to in the most spendthrift fashion, as the first and easiest thing that comes to hand.”—*Essay on Truth* (F. C.) In the dialogue following this Essay, Ellesmere says “A wise man would be sorry that his fellows should think better of him than he deserves.”]



**Para 11. Fit objects.....possess**—Among the best means of living a contented life, are suitable occupations for one's spare time. **Intervals** (of business)—leisure hours. **The lives..... apathy**—Many persons go through life, now eagerly engaged in some absorbing work, and then lapsing into a state of inaction, with nothing to interest them, or occupy their thoughts. **Alter-nation**—oscillation ; see-saw ; absence of any medium between &c. **One engrossing** : the only occupation they have ; the work that takes up all their attention and energy. **Listless apathy**—inquiet dullness ; or absence of peace and contentment, due to the absence of anything to interest them. **Grinding**—working like a mill ; very busy. **Now .....quiescence**—The leisure time is generally spent in inquiet inactivity by many of those who work very hard in their hours of business ; while one portion of their lives is full of absorbing work, the rest is unemployed but not peaceful. **Torpid &c.**—“listlessly apathetic” ; motionless without true rest or quiet ; inactive without peace. **Which may be &c.**—which has a never-failing interest for him ; which he can engage in with pleasure whenever he likes. **Turn**—direct his mind ; take up. **Recreation**—diversion ; recruiting his energies. [On this subject of the necessity of having congenial work for one's leisure hours, Helps puts the following words into the mouth of Ellesmere in *Animals and their Masters* : “I won't be a beaver if I can help it. One of the errors of this age is, a deification of work for the mere sake of work. I hate fussiness. The really good man, and the man of beautiful nature, like the good fish, can be idle and innocent too. Show me the man who employs his leisure well, and I will tell you who will go to heaven.”—And in his *Companions of My Solitude* Helps insists on the desirability of cultivating accomplishments (especially music) to make one's leisure time enjoyable : “How much accomplishments of various kind would come in to help men to get rid of over-riding small cares and petty anxieties. These accomplishments mostly appeal to another world of thought and feeling than that in which the little troubles were bred. The studious, the busy, and the sorrowful might find in art a change of thought which nothing else, at least of worldly things, could give them.”—See also the excellent essay on Recreation in *Friends in Council*, Bk I.]

**Para 2. And if** : *if* does not express doubt here, but simply introduces a reason or premise.) And since it is necessary for us to have some pursuits &c. to keep our thoughts always interested or employed, much more necessary is it to keep our affections engaged—to have something or somebody to love. **What must** : how great must this necessity be ; will it not be still more necessary to provide &c. **With** has here the force of *in the case of*. **Depend upon it**—(you may depend &c.) rest assured ; assuredly ; unquestionably. **Fatal idleness**—most deadly or injurious kind of inactivity. [The sentence means—There can be no doubt that a

man with nothing to engage his affections, soon gets tired of life.] **And the man:** On the other hand, whoever feels his life to be dull and useless, does so because his heart is not properly interested in his fellow-men,—because he is an egotist, absorbed in self (who cares for nobody) This sentence tells us that the reverse (or rather the inverse) of the above statement is also true; not only do all whose hearts are idle get disgusted with life, but all who are disgusted with life are men whose hearts are idle. [It is perhaps possible for people when young to be happy even if they are selfish and think merely of their own interests and pleasures; but as men advance in life, it is necessary for them to care for others, at least for their children, to prevent life appearing, as Hamlet says, “weary, stale, flat and unprofitable.” In the essay on the Exercise of Benevolence, the author shows how the heart is to be interested in the concerns of others.]

**Para 13. You cannot.....to do**—If you go on regarding what happens to you in this life as of supreme importance (as many people indeed do), you can never help being discontented. That is, you must not think worldly affairs to be all in all, if you wish to be contented. **Ridiculous**—absurdly high. **Observe.....them**—See how miserable these people are in consequence of their extreme anxiety about worldly matters. *It* refers to “attaching a ridiculous degree of importance to” &c., and *them* to the “many people” who are inclined to attach &c.—the narrow-minded men of the world. **Uncomfortable**—miserable; quite upset. **Little projects**—petty wishes or plans;—the trifling things which are all-important in their eyes. **Turn out**—yield results. **According &c.**—exactly as they wish or expect; that is, if their little calculations are upset (as these are so likely to be) by unforeseen circumstances. **Nothing.....them**—(they expect) that everything should be smooth for them; *i.e.* they are to meet with no obstacles. **Angular**—*viz.* presenting sharp points (so as to prick or scratch one who holds, or comes into contact with it); thorny; full of difficulties or unpleasant features. Some commentators explain it as ‘bent or deviating from the line they have chalked out’; but this is not the image which the author wishes to suggest. **External things**—what they can see and hear; outward signs of success—*e.g.* wealth, rank &c. **Realities**—things really existing (and fit to be thought of, or sought after. It is implied that such men do not care about true peace of mind, the improvement of their souls, &c. **Fixed.....here**—made this earth their home; do not look forward to anything beyond this life. **They must.....mind**—they want this life to be as prosperous as possible; they wish all earthly affairs to turn out exactly according to their fancy—cannot put up with the slightest disappointment. *It* refers to “abode.” The figure in this expression may be expanded thus: When we mean to stay for a short time at any place, we do not

care so much to have everything arranged as we like, we are ready to put up with some temporary inconveniences. But when we make up our minds to dwell permanently at a place, we cannot put up with anything that is distasteful to us. These worldly men rely solely for happiness on the things of this life, and so they feel miserable unless all these things are exactly fashioned to their taste. [The sentence means—The result of this extreme concern about worldly matters, is that such men are quite upset by any disappointment; they expect everything to be quite smooth and agreeable; they look upon material blessings as the only things worth caring about; they fancy they are permanent residents of this world, and wish to order everything here according to their taste.]

**In all.....man:** They are like gamblers, intensely anxious about the success of their ventures, who cannot wait in calm hope for the issue, as an honest worker does. **Anxiety of a gambler**—the feverish suspense with which a gambler (who has staked or risked a large sum) watches the result of his throw. A gambler is one who habitually plays for money. Here<sup>1</sup> those who stake everything—*i.e.*, all their happiness—on the chance of securing worldly success, are compared to reckless gamblers; for a gambler can never be sure of winning,—he relies solely on good fortune, whereas a workman feels that his industry will have its reward. **Calmness**—composure; absence of intense agitation or anxiety. [A man who does what he believes to be his duty, feels sure of happiness in the next world if not in this, and is generally contented in this life also, because he does not expect a large measure of worldly good fortune, and does not overestimate the importance of the latter. He is like an honest labourer who is content with his wages, or a farmer who reaps as he has sown.] **It is however &c.** What such men are anxious about is simply whether or not they will attain the object they are struggling to secure; they do not care whether or not they are actuated by worthy motives. That is, they may be seeking merely to promote their petty selfish ends; but such ends are all-important in their eyes. **Concern**—anxiety. **It will.....hence:** whether we prosper or not, it will make no difference a hundred years after (when we shall be dead.) That is, worldly success is a matter of a few years only—all must die, be they rich or poor, famous or obscure. **So says:** This is the advice of an Epicurean, as he passes by with his usual air of indifference. **Epicurean:** follower of Epicurus, a Greek Philosopher, who taught that pleasure is the end and aim of life [though by pleasure he really meant the higher or intellectual pleasures, rather than the pleasures of the senses; and it was only afterwards, when his teachings were debased by his successors, that the famous maxim “Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow you may die” came to represent the doctrine of Epicurus in the popular estima-

tion.] Here the epicurean represents those who do not take life seriously, do not take sufficient interest in the concerns of men. Compare the use of this word in Essay I.

**5. Saunters by**—wanders idly about ; goes through life in a careless, indifferent attitude. This phrase keeps up the idea in *Epicurean*. As an Epicurean does not take things seriously, his advice is that men should learn to realise how short-lived they and their success &c. are, and how little they should care about such things. **The christian .....future** : The true believer in Christianity urges such worldly men to think not merely of their temporal concerns—the affairs of this short life—but to fix their hopes and fears on the concerns of the next world. The Christian believes in a future life, and asks worldly men to try to act in such a way as to secure salvation and happiness in the life to come, and to dread the consequences of falling into sin. [The Epicurean and the Christian agree in regarding this life as short and its affairs as of no great moment ; but they differ about the future life—the former not recognizing that life at all, while the latter looks upon it as eternal, and dwells upon the necessity of preparing ourselves for it.]

**But they... ..that** : These worldly men, however are quite immersed in the affairs of this life, though that does not enable them to derive real happiness—to enjoy the blessings even of this life (for they are always tortured by anxieties and apprehensions, and go on “fretting” etc.—dissatisfied with the measure of success they achieve.) **Up to their lips** : The reference is to the story of Tantalus, who is represented in classical mythology as punished in an ingeniously cruel way by the gods : he was placed up to his chin in water, and had luscious fruit hanging apparently within reach, but as often as he tried to satisfy his agony of thirst and hunger, the water retreated from his lips, and the fruit was removed to a distance. **In the present**—in the concerns of the passing hour—or of this short life. **For that** : for being “up to their lips” &c ; for being wholly absorbed in petty worldly affairs. [Though it might at first seem that they would succeed in what they pursue with such exclusive devotion, yet the truth is, happiness is by no means more certainly attained, by being made one’s direct object. On the contrary those who think more of others or of their duty, and love the work they are honestly engaged in, are found to be more happy than the ambitious or the pleasure-seeking.] **And so...earth** : The worldly men pursue their petty selfish ends, always grumbling, scheming, and struggling with each other ; till death (about which they did not think at all) overtakes them and puts an end to all their little projects. **About which.....anxious** : for which they hardly felt the slightest concern ; which they were utterly unprepared for. **Sweeps away**—carries off. **Cobwebs**—light or shortlived schemes (which are compared to a spider’s webs) ; petty or unsubstantial projects.

**Para 13** may be summarised thus : Many persons make themselves uncomfortable by seeking too eagerly to promote their worldly interests ; they expect to be perfectly successful, to meet with no reverses or disappointments ; they never think of death or a future life, but go on ever anxiously devising plans to attain wealth and power, as if this earth were their permanent abode. But all this care and anxiety cannot make them contented and happy even in this life.]

**Para 14. I have...grief** : ‘It is not my purpose to propose infallible remedies for the great sorrows of life, or to claim that I can teach men some subtle or ingenious means of preventing them.’ He means that his only intention is to show how we may avoid evils or causes of misery that are to a great extent imaginary. **Specifics**—antidotes, or remedies warranted to cure particular diseases ; hence, a certain cure. He means he is not like a quack or mountebank who claims to have invented a means of cure infallibly efficacious in certain diseases. **Refined** (slightly ironical)—very clever or ingenious. **As long.....come** : Even in real afflictions, however, one should remember that as long as any remedies are available—before the case is quite desperate,—it is improper to give ourselves up to grief. **But when.....pain** : When, however, a calamity has befallen us and cannot be helped, we ought to endure the mental suffering it causes, with patient resignation, as we bear physical pain. **It is.....only without**—It is only when we are overcome by some sudden stroke of sorrow or pain, that we have any excuse for not attending to our duties ; for even when we lose our nearest and dearest, or labour under some great grief, such duties remain duties—do not cease to be binding. **Paroxysm** (Gr. *Para*=in-excess, and *oxyno*—to sharpen)—sharp fit, or sudden violence (as of a disease) ; convulsion. That is, the short period during which we are completely beside ourselves, or unable to control, our sorrow or pain. **Justify us in**—furnish us with any excuse for. **Bereavement**—loss ; death of one very dear to us. **Leave us without**—free or exempt us from ; make no longer obligatory.

**And we.....man**—As for such great sorrows, another source of consolation is to reflect that sorrow is a thing no man can escape, that it puts our virtues to proof, that it is peculiar to man,—what he only, of all earthly creatures, has to endure. [Parallel passages : “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (*i.e.* purifies by means of sorrow) —*Bible*. Trench says—

- “Yet suffering is a holy thing,  
Without it what were we?”

And Helps elsewhere calls sorrow not only a privilege but a *possession—an experience*. He makes Milverton (one of the *Friends in Council*) say : “We lament over a man’s sorrows, struggles, disasters, and shortcomings ; yet they were possessions too. We mostly speak of sufferings and trials as good, perhaps, in their result ;



but we hardly admit that they may be good in themselves. Yet they are knowledge—how else to be acquired, unless by making men as gods, enabling them to understand without experience. *All that men go through may be absolutely the best for them*—no such thing as evil. But, you will say, they might have been created different and higher. But any sentient being may set up the same claim : a fly that it had not been made a man : so that each would complain of not being all.” And he quotes from Sir Henry Taylor :

“He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend.  
Eternity mourns that. ’Tis an ill cure  
For life’s worst ills, to have no time to feel them.  
Where sorrow’s held intrusive and turned out,  
There wisdom will not enter, nor true power,  
Nor aught that dignifies humanity.”]

**Lot** : cf.—“Infelicities of various kinds belong to the state here below. Who are we that we should not take our share?” *Companions of My Solitude*. **Trial** : This earthly life is often called a state of probation, a period of trial. **Privilege** (*lit* private law.) It is hardly correct to speak of all inferior animals as capable of pain but not of sorrow. But the author means that those men who have to suffer some great sorrow, may generally consider themselves especially favoured. See quotations above.

**Para 15. Are comparatively** : touch more or less the surface only. **Serviceable**—useful. **There is much &c.**—A great deal that men have to endure cannot be reached—*i.e.* consoled—by such aids. Helps quotes elsewhere the weighty saying of Seneca: *Levis est dolor qui capere consilium potest, i.e.* light is the sorrow that admits of consolation. **Cannot touch**—leave uncured ; cannot reach or affect. **Pagans**—the ancient Greeks and Romans—especially the former. The word means etym. ‘villager’ (for after Christianity had been adopted by the townspeople in the Roman world, the villagers retained the old faith for some time longer.) **More potent** (than the remedies based on reason or reflection.) The supernatural sources of consolation—or rather the consoling belief in some supernatural agency—is here called more powerful, as the heart of man cannot find peace amidst the great sufferings of life, except by means of such belief. He must feel that there is a power whose ways he cannot understand or control ; otherwise he goes on grumbling, and fancying himself unjustly treated by his fellow men. **They could.....rest upon**—They were impelled to adopt some great theory of life from which to derive consolation. (It was of course the philosophers that taught such ideas ; but these were adopted by their fellow-men, because the latter found great comfort in such belief.) **Rest upon**—in which to find peace, or comfort, for their souls. **Still**—calm. **Throbbings**—agitations ; violent beatings or palpitations. **Primeval mystery**—great unknown cause ; mysterious agency regulating all things from the

beginning of time. **Be answerable**—account. [The sentence means—The Greeks and Romans, who were denied the consolations of Christianity, were unavoidably led to believe and draw consolation from some great idea by which to attain peace amidst the troubles and agonies of life,—some inscrutable cause to which they might attribute all their sufferings.] **Such**—of this kind—*viz.* a great mysterious idea. **Necessity**—Fate; that what was decreed or destined to take place, must happen. [The modern idea of Necessity or Reign of Law—as opposed to the doctrine of Free Will—is that all phenomena depend upon and always follow certain causes, even our actions depending on our characters, circumstances and laws of human nature. But the old idea was Fatalism.] **The source &c.**—on which the schools of philosophy, such as those of the Stoics and Epicureans, were based; the Stoics &c. took their stand upon the idea of Necessity, as the rational basis of their doctrines. **Stoics** (so called from Gr. *Stoa* or porch—for Zeno, the founder of the School, taught in a portico at Athens—a sect or body of philosophers founded by Zeno in the 4th century B.C. He taught that pain and sorrow were no evils—the only evil being moral evil or wickedness; that the wise man should bear all pain &c. quietly, for by no human efforts can these be avoided. “Follow nature” was the moral principle of the Stoics—their moral theory being very austere or severe, all personal consideration or desire for pleasure being rejected, and every external end being looked upon as foreign to morality. Resignation was looked upon as the great end to be attained—God being viewed as the eternal Necessity which subjects all to unalterable law,—the perfect wisdom which upholds the universe. This shows that the Stoic system is based upon Necessity.) **Epicurean**: see note, Para 13. The Epicurean system can be said to be based on the doctrine of Necessity, only in this sense that it felt no room in Nature for the will of God or the gods; for Epicurus taught that man cannot help his own lot, either by his own exertions or by praying to the gods. [As Epicurus regarded the Gods as supremely happy, without any human wants, and as true bliss is peace, the gods never trouble either themselves or others, so they can have nothing to do with the superintendence of the affairs of the world. The highest good of the Epicureans lay in felicity—permanent tranquil satisfaction; not sensual pleasure, for this felicity must be for the whole of life, and must consist chiefly in the joy of the spirit—achieved by the life of the wise man, who in the feeling of his inner worth, is superior to the blows of fortune.] **Christianity rests**: A Christian’s grounds of consolation and hope are very different—*viz.* the goodness of God, and the provision for happiness in heaven of those who accept the true faith. Christians (with the exception of the Calvinists) do not admit the doctrine of Necessity, but uphold that of Free Will, and account-



for evil and misery by reference to man's sinfulness—arising from the original sin committed by the first parents. **And surely..... life**—As a Christian places his trust in the goodness of God and the prospect of happiness in a future life, he ought to be able to derive comfort from this belief amidst grave misfortunes, as well as amidst the minor worries of life ; though indeed these latter are harder to bear, and torment even those whose lives seem most peaceful. Or more briefly—A Christian ought to be able to bear, by virtue of his faith and hope, not merely the great calamities, but the petty annoyances from which the happiest lives are not free—and which are really more trying. **Bear the severer test**—prove equal to the trial which is harder to undergo ; not give way under what tries one's patience more sorely. **Supporting him against**—enabling him to endure cheerfully. **Under-current**—hidden stream ; *i.e.* those vexations or petty troubles which often pass unobserved. **Smoothest**—seemingly or apparently the happiest. Cf. the familiar but admirable proverb—*Nobody knows where the shoe pinches but he that wears it.* And as Helps says elsewhere—“Mean misfortunes are often the most difficult to bear. There is no instrument of philosophy small enough to take them up and deal with them. A long career of small anxieties is also very hard to bear.”

[The lessons of this essay may be briefly summed up thus : Do not be too sensitive—do not expect too much—take the most cheerful view of everything—avoid exaggerating minor evils—do not be quite worldly—and rely on religious consolation in all trials of life.]

## ESSAY III.

### ON SELF-DISCIPLINE.

#### Substance of the Paragraphs :

1. Any success in self-discipline should not produce undue confidence in one's powers ; we should be tremblingly thankful to God for having escaped a great danger.

2. Knowledge of ourselves should be full and deep, not such as serves merely to feed self-love and vanity ; thorough knowledge is necessary for the purpose of disciplining our character.

3. Inquiry into our character must be searching and progressive—*i.e.* not confined to this or that action or habit, but traced to motives and finally to principles and evil disposition—to the fundamental law violated by indulgence in such habits.

4. A vicious habit is like a mist, to be removed by attaining to a higher standard of conduct or conception of duty.

5. The surest means of conquering evil habits and passions is to add to and strengthen the good ones ; by learning to prize the really worthy ends of life, one's former selfishness appears strange and loathsome.

6. Cultivate a liberal sympathetic spirit, and you will learn to regard your uncharitableness as quite disgusting.

7-8. Every human concern has its physical as well as spiritual side, both of which must be attended to ; though greater care should be taken to attain right principles, help from external circumstances should not be despised, remembering however, that these go but a little way, and have no motive power.

9. Similarly suggestions of worldly wisdom should be listened to when they are useful ; but too much importance should not be attached to them, as they have little moral efficacy or power to effect a radical improvement.

10. Prayer, if sincere, is a neverfailing source of moral strength ; but thoughtless, mechanical prayer is useless, nay blasphemous.

**Para 1. There is self-confidence**—If we can bring ourselves under the control of reason, we are likely to form an unduly high estimate of our moral strength to rely too much on our power of governing our passions &c. **Self-discipline**—disciplining or training one's habits, dispositions &c ; bringing one's motives, passions &c. under the control of reason (so as to improve one's character and behaviour. **Self-confidence** (used in a slightly unfavourable sense—reliance on one's strength ; absence of modesty as to one's powers. [ The folly of such undue self-confidence is described in the author's *Companions of My Solitude*. "In overcoming temptations, there is a certain confidence which had better be put aside. This confidence sometimes results from a faith in reason, or rather a faith in our being exactly amenable to reason. For instance, it is sometime before a man ceases to have a full belief in his own powers of accomplishing by direct means the absolute rule in his mind...It requires a good many fallings in the mire, before a man finds that his own mind, temperament and faculties will give him as much or more trouble to manage than his affairs, his family, or than the whole world besides.] **And the more so**—And this is more likely to be the case ; the danger is all the greater. **When the motives &c.**—When a man disciplining himself keeps his feelings &c. in check merely for worldly ends, or when the effect of such discipline is only external (*i.e.* in matters of behaviour) and does not touch the character. **Poor**—Low ; not noble. **Worldly** *i.e.* to get the good opinions of other men. • For instance when a man, naturally somewhat irritable, trains himself to conceal the signs of anger, simply to avoid offending others. **Outward** : of course when the motives are worldly, the improvement effected by self-discipline touches only the outward behaviour or manner ; for such motives cannot effect a radical improvement in character. **But surely** : There can be doubt, however

that a man should not simply feel elated by his success in conquering some bad habit or propensity. The author means that the subject is so solemn, that it is only a shallow mind that looks upon such success simply as a thing to boast of. **Got the better of**—overcome. *Better* = mastery. When one overpowers another in fighting, he shows himself better, *i. e.* stronger, than his antagonist—proves that he is the ‘better man.’ **Disposition** is deeper than *habit*; the former has reference to *character*, the latter only to *conduct* or action. **Sensations** (not used in the philosophical sense)—feelings. **Exultation**—triumph; pleasing consciousness of one’s own strength or superiority (over those who cannot conquer such habits.) **Ought they...favour**—On the contrary, a man should on such an occasion, to feel as if he has just been able to avoid falling into a deep pit, or as if he has come off victorious in a combat which might have been fatal to him; a sort of trembling, or dizziness, might well come over him as he realises the terrible danger he has narrowly escaped. **Ought they**: *they* refers to *sensations*. **Akin to**—Something like; resemble. **Shuddering faintness**—A feeling of giddiness or dizziness causing one to tremble. It is well known that to look down a precipice, deep well &c., makes the head swim; and a vivid recollection of such a danger might produce the same effect. **Chasm**—deep cleft or opening (in a rock.) **Guided to avoid**—enabled to escape falling into, by the help of a guide; able to avoid by following the footsteps of another. **Dubious**—of which the issue was doubtful; with one whom he was by no means certain to conquer. **Deadly**—Mortal. As the habit might soon have grown too strong to be given up, and might have ruined his prospects in life, the struggle to overcome it is compared to a doubtful combat ending in the death of one of the combatants. **Terminated &c.**—ended in his victory; in which he had triumphed at last. **The sense.....overcome**—It is when we have just escaped a danger that we realise most vividly how terrible it was—how fatal it would have been to fall into it. **Apprehended**—understood; grasped (by the mind.) [The reason why the danger is best realised after it is over, is that when we are face to face with it, or struggling with it, all our attention and mental energy are absorbed in the struggle; and there is also a certain excitement at the time, which deadens the power of feeling or clearly perceiving the gravity of the peril. This is analogous to the well-known fact, that when wounded in “hot blood,” as it is called (*i. e.* in actual fighting, as on the battle-field) one does not for the time feel any pain; even the loss of a limb, it is said, sometimes remains unnoticed for a little while, by the person who suffers it.]

**Para 2. Grounded on**—Founded on; cannot be attempted without. **Self-knowledge**—Knowing one’s own character, abilities &c. **A man.....insight**—A man may indeed determine to attempt disciplining himself by only a vague perception of his having sunk low in point of character; but he should try to get further knowledge

of his character. That is, it is desirable to have a full and deep knowledge of one's character, though even a slight knowledge may be sufficient to produce a desire for moral improvement. **Led to resolve upon**—induced to begin earnestly. **General**—not definite. **Course**—process ; a series of steps. **Faint glimpse**—realising in a dim sort of a way. **Small insight**—slight perception or knowledge (of his moral condition.) **His...disorder**—The first thing he should do in disciplining himself is to try to ascertain how far his moral disease extends—how far his nature has been vitiated or spoilt. **The deeper...thoroughly**—One cannot go too far in this work of self-examination ; he ought to ascertain as well as possible what is wrong with him as a moral being. **Probe** : *lit.* to examine the depth of a wound or ulcer by means of the probe—a surgeon's instrument ; hence, to search to the bottom—examine fully into. **Men ..circumstances**—It often happens that when men know a little of their own nature they use this knowledge cleverly to feed their vanity, or to find delight in imagining what they would do if they were placed in the position of other people (*e. g.* if they had much wealth or power.) **Frame**—weave ; invent. **Skilful flattery**—such thoughts or reflections as are well fitted to gratify their vanity. [Self-flattery is skilful, because one can fancy himself superior in those respects precisely, in which he wishes to be thought superior. As Bacon, quoting from Plutarch, says : “The arch-flatterer, with whom all the petty flatterers (*i. e.* other people) have intelligence, is a man's self.”] **Imaginary circumstances** : See next Essay, para 7. **For flatteries...required**—I admit that a superficial knowledge of one's self is sufficient for indulging one's vanity or fancy in this way. **But he...soul**—If, however, one seeks self-knowledge in order to bring himself under the control of reason, he must try to acquire a full knowledge of his own nature, and should not be afraid of realising all his defects and evil propensities. **Shrink**—avoid (as something disagreeable ; he must not palliate or try to find excuses for, any of his shortcomings, however serious. [Of the importance of telling the truth to one's ownself, Helps says in an Essay on *Truth* : “Truth to one's self is not merely truth about one's self. It consists in maintaining an openness and justness of soul which brings a man into relation with all truth. For this, all the senses, if you might so call them, of the soul must be uninjured ; that is, the affections and the perceptions must be just. For a man to speak the truth to himself comprehends all goodness ; and for us mortals can only be an *aim*... All men have a deep interest that each man should tell himself the truth. Not only will he become a better man, but he will understand them better. If men know themselves, they could not be intolerant to others.” *Friends in Council* Bk I.] **To thine own self &c.** These words (in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 3) are put into the mouth of Polonius as parting advice to his son Laertes who is about to proceed on a journey to Paris. The

meaning is : Be true to your own interests—always mind what will benefit yourself most ; and the consequence of this will certainly be that you will have to deal honestly and fairly with others also. [For if a man is false to others, he will be found out, sooner or later, and hated or despised in consequence.] **Follow**—be the result. **As the night &c.**—as surely as the night follows the day ; *i.e.* with absolute certainty ; necessarily. **Courtier**—one who enjoys the society of the king &c. ; a worldly man (generally of high rank) **Polonius** : the Chamberlain of the king (in the play of *Hamlet*.) He is represented as a garrulous old man, still fancying himself very wise, although fast sinking into dotage. His advice to his son consists of commonplace remarks, though uttered with a great air of wisdom. **Meant this &c.**—wanted the words to be understood merely as a maxim of prudence, or success in the world. **But it.....deeply.**—But the saying admits of a much deeper meaning. **Construed**—interpreted ; made to convey. **More deeply** : *viz.* to mean ‘Try to understand yourself thoroughly—never disguise or conceal any of your defects from yourself ; and then you will not fail to behave honestly towards others as well’. See concluding sentence of the above quotation from the author’s *Essay on Truth*. [Some commentators explain the saying of Polonius differently : ‘Never tell a lie to yourself, and then you will get into the habit of telling the truth ; and will never tell a lie to others’. But this is not so worldly, and does not differ so markedly from the deeper meaning. It is better to suppose that Polonius advises his son never to be false to his own *interests*—to be wisely selfish ; at any rate this is the meaning which Helps attributes to Polonius. For it may be said that Polonius merely repeats a fine-sounding maxim, without any clear idea as to what it means.]

**Para 3. Imagine...self-improvement**—Suppose in the next place, that a man is quite aware of the fact that he is likely to sink lower and lower down in point of morals, and that he exerts himself to the best of his power to change his character for the better. **Thoroughly awake to**—to have realised fully. **State of danger**—how diseased or unsound its moral condition is. **Whole energies &c.**—that he puts forth all his efforts to ameliorate his character—to rise from his degraded condition. **At this...nature**—when a man has arrived at this stage, he often gets into the habit of examining his nature only partially. **Introspection**—looking within (into one’s own mind) examining our actions, motives, principles &c. **Too limited**—which does not go far enough. **We scrutinise** : we examine each action narrowly, but treat it separately, apart from all others that went before, as if it arose by itself—as if it were an isolated instance of wrong conduct. [This is what the author means by “limited introspection”—namely a scrutiny of particular actions only, though every such action is a link in a long chain.] **Self-originating**—not traceable (as it really is) to past actions, or to dispositions rooted



in our nature. **And so** : And therefore, inspite of the suffering caused and resolution shown by such examination, it does but little good—simply because it does not go far enough. **Pain**—remorse, or regret (for the improper acts we find we have committed.) **Resolution**—strength or firmness of mind. A weak-minded man is of course unable to conduct such an examination. **Any . . . .progressive**—Whenever we inquire into our actions in a sincere spirit, some good will indeed result ; but we should not be content with a superficial inquiry, we ought to make it thorough and go deeper and deeper (into the source of the mischief.) **Truthful** : *i.e.* not with a view to disguise or justify any improper deeds—or to feed our vanity. See preceding para. **Searching**—leaving no point (or motive) unexamined. **Progressive**—leading up, or advancing, from outward deeds to the dispositions &c. See below. **Its aim** : Our object in carrying on such a scrutiny should be, not merely to inquire into this or that action, but to find out the real causes (from which such actions proceed.) **Principles**—Springs of action. See below—“where it is that we are wrong in the heart.” **Thus . . . .regret** : To show that it is nearly useless to scrutinise actions merely, the author says—Suppose that we understand how wrong it is to indulge in a certain bad habit ; in that case every time we yield to the habit we feel keen remorse, and we eagerly wish for an occasion to show that we have improved—as we think we must have got rid of the habit since we have felt remorse for it. **Upbraids us**—takes us to task. **Amendment**—moral improvement. **Pangs of regret**—upbraiding of conscience ; agony of remorse. **The trial . . . .awakened** : when however, the occasion for testing our supposed amendment comes, we are by no means sure to act properly ; for we may or may not then remember the regret we have felt ; if we do not forget it, then we may resist the temptation, but if we do (as is likely enough) we yield to it—just as we used to do before we came to feel how bad the habit was. [Take the vicious habit of drinking : a man understands how ruinous the indulgence is, bitterly reproaches himself for it, and hopes that he will never yield to it again. But after a time he meets those with whom he has made merry many times before ; and (unless he vividly remembers at the time the remorse he has felt) he cannot resist their pressing invitation to drink with them. This comes of not having gone to the root of the matter—not adopting new and better principles.] **Trial**—test ; the longed—for opportunity of proving whether he has got rid of the habit. **Saves us**—prevents us from going astray ;—enables us to go unharmed. **Awakened**—roused (to a sense of our wrong-doing.) **Now . . . .heart**—When this sort of thing happens, we should go to the root, that is, try to make out the evil disposition or passion that feeds the bad habit—keeps it alive. **Begin &c.**—make our examination searching ; trace the evil to its source. **Where it is** :

the secret source of our weakness or evil propensity. **This.....usual**—To find out the real source of the mischief, it is not enough to examine carefully each case in which we yield to the habit and to note what time intervened between two successive instances, and whether on the last occasion the temptation was stronger or weaker than before. (All these, he means, are minor matters, which it is nearly useless to note.) **Instead.....in question**: we need not attend particularly to such minor details; but should rather try to reach the true essence or source of evil that we might make out correctly what moral principle or commandment of God is disregarded in yielding to the habit. **Substance**—essence, or real nature (of the evil.) **Fundamental**—forming the basis of moral conduct. **In question**—which we are considering. **That precept &c.**—We should fix our attention on this fundamental principle; if we do so, we are more likely to effect a lasting improvement in our character. **Make our study**—dwell on, or impress on our mind.

**Para 4. Infinite.....altogether**—No amount of labour would be of any avail in trying to get rid of a mist; but by going up a mountain, you may find yourself quite above the region of mists. That is, when one is in the midst of a fog, no human efforts can sweep it away from the place; the simplest means of escaping from it soon is to go up to a greater height—from which the mist will be seen covering lower levels like a cloud. (This is a very familiar sight in mountainous regions.) **Look over it**—prevent your vision being at all obstructed by the mist. Evil habits, associations, dispositions &c. are compared to a mist. **So it is &c.** This may well be applied to the task of improving our character: we try hard to combat a bad habit and fail to conquer it; but we might place ourselves above the reach of its influence by attaining to a loftier standard of morals. The author means—In combating a vicious habit, the surest and easiest way to victory is to bring oneself under higher moral principles; we can hardly hope to get the better of such a habit so long as we remain on the lower moral level in which we have contracted or formed the habit. [This is illustrated in the next two paragraphs.] **Higher moral atmosphere**—loftier level or standard of conduct—e.g. a higher conception of our duties, deeper and wider sympathies &c. [For instance suppose that at one time we cared only for the opinion of our fellow-men, and got into the habit of committing wrong actions which either could not come to the knowledge of others, or did not arouse their contempt or censure even if known; we cannot in such a case, get rid of the habit, unless we reach a higher standard of morals than the mere opinion of our fellow-men—unless we learn to fear God, to aim at moral purity or perfection as the highest end of life, or attain a true conception of Duty. Any of these may be spoken of as a *higher moral atmosphere*. Some



commentators take the phrase to mean the society of nobler and holier men. But though this is one way of reaching a higher moral level, it not necessary to suppose that only this is meant.]

**Para 5. As 1... ..ones**—Some **one** has well said that we can conquer our evil dispositions &c. most successfully by increasing the number of worthy aims, and strengthening the feelings that are centred on proper objects—(e.g. the domestic feelings, love for our children, and for our fellowmen &c.) **By adopting.....alliances.**—If you take this course, you will be like a prudent king who, knowing how strong his enemy is, seeks humbly to secure the help of some neighbouring princes as allies. **You will.....enemy :** though you do not directly fight with the evil passions &c., it is not to be thought that you allow them to subdue you. That is, you adopt an indirect and slow, but an effective and sure means of finally triumphing over the worse part of your nature. **In all humility**—confessing your inability (to reform yourself by direct means.) **To form :** to enter into &c. ; to secure auxiliaries for yourself. **You will then :** you will thus acquire a firmness of character in executing good resolves, which will enable you more easily to conquer bad habits. **You will find .....upon you**—when you place your affections on really worthy objects, you will find that the petty selfish aims you once loved so much, will seem loathsome ; so much so, that you will hardly be able to realise or understand how you could possibly have been so much influenced by such unworthy aims. **Set your heart upon**—desire earnestly to attain. **Had hold upon**—enslaved ; engrossed your thoughts.

**Para 6. In the same way :** Again, if you come to enter more deeply into the feelings of others, and feel for a larger circle, too, of your fellow-beings, you will be cured of your inveterate prejudices ; you will be disgusted with the tendency you once had to think and speak ill of other people ; your new and better feelings and opinions will be sure to drive out such a narrow unkind spirit. **Extend.....sympathies**—grow more liberal (in your appreciation of the thoughts &c., of others.) **Clung obstinately**—could not be shaken off ; which you could not help entertaining. **Fall away**—wear off ; disappear of themselves. **Uncharitableness**—readiness to judge hastily and harshly of others. See next essay, paras 7 and 8. **Absolutely**—utterly ; altogether. **Distasteful**—repugnant ; hateful. **Brought home to it**—brought to bear upon it ; made it associate with ; thrown it into the company of. **Cannot live**—is incompatible. [The metaphor is that of bringing home a cat to expel and kill the rats.]

**Para 7. Man.....into it.**—A human being has two sides—the physical and the spiritual ; so in all his affairs both these elements of his nature should be brought into play : neither the one nor the other should be exclusively attended to. **Twofold nature :** the higher or spiritual, and the physical or material. The physical

side of man's nature gives him the animal wants and appetites and makes outward circumstances important for him ; and the spiritual element makes him a moral being, with noble principles and springs of action, fear of God and of the reproach of conscience. [The student will find this emphasized in Blackie's *Self-Culture* ; see pp. 57-9.] **Concerned**—interested ; affected. **Spirit and form** : the inner and the outer aspect—lofty moral principles &c. on the one hand, and outward circumstances, actions &c. on the other. [The words are very vague, but we must interpret them here by reference to what follows ; see next para.] **Enter into**—find play or scope in ; be brought into full use. [To take a simple illustration, if one wants to make his children happy, it will not be enough to give them good food, clothes &c. and to have every care taken of their health ; they must be made to feel that they are loved, their feelings and tastes should not be quite disregarded ; the former being, however indispensably necessary at the same time. Again, to teach children effectively, it will not be enough (though necessary) to procure them suitable books, to insist on their preparing the lessons, &c. ; they must be made to feel real interest and pleasure in their work—the ardour and enthusiasm of the teacher himself being indispensable for this purpose ; mere ardour, however, without firmness in enforcing attention and industry on the part of the pupils, is of little use.] **It is idol worship** : To make the form everything, and the spirit nothing—to ignore the latter—would be a sort of idolatry. That is, he who thinks only of the outward element, and neglects the inner, may be compared to an idolator who worships stocks and stones or figures made with human hands. **But.....form**—On the other hand to do away with the external element altogether is to indulge in empty speculations, or abstractions. Thus a religion that consists of doctrines and moral precepts only, however pure and noble these may be, will fail to be accepted by the people in general, or to produce much influence over the lives of its followers—impressive outward ceremonies etc. being indispensable as well. **All this applies.** (How it is to be applied is shown in the next para.)—To train our character, we must avail ourselves of suitable external circumstances, and considerations of prudence ; but at the same time we must have right principles, and make our ideal of conduct noble.

**Para 8. Outward circumstance**—something connected with the external world (*e.g.* some particular time or place)—but having nothing to do with character, or principles of action. **Good resolutions**—any settled purpose to grow better, or do something praiseworthy. **Resolve on commencing** : Make up their minds to give up a particular bad habit from the beginning of the new year. **They are at such a place**—when they go away from where they now are, and begin to live somewhere else. (Here the

spiritual element consists in forming a good resolution, which has reference to character, and the external circumstance is a certain change in time or place.) **Thus shows** : in seeking the help of some external circumstance. **Must not conclude** : It would be unwise to assert (though such reliance on what is external is a proof of weakness) that it is no use trying to get such aid (to one's good purposes.) **At the same time that**—although. **Cannot safely neglect** : Because the task of conquering bad habits is exceedingly difficult, in which no help, however slight, can be despised. **Far is it from**—it is altogether opposed to. **True humility**—modest view of our own powers. [The sentence means : We ought certainly to take most care to acquire correct rules of conduct, but it would not be safe to despise any help whatever which may give us more power to get the better of our bad habits ; it would be mere rash self-sufficiency to do so.] **The ring of Eastern story** : the story of Sultan Amurath, who on a visit to the tomb of his father, Sultan Abraham, was furnished by the spirit of his father with a magic ring, in which was set a ruby of deep colour, having the property of turning pale in hue when the wearer did anything wrong. The story is given in the *Adventurer*, no. 120.—See *British Essayists*. **Want of shame**—being guilty of something shameful, or disgraceful. [The sentence means : Man is so weak a creature, so ready to yield to temptation, that it would be of great use to him to have something ever at hand to warn him when he is about to go wrong ; like the ruby in Sultan Amurath's rings which is said to have possessed the magical virtue of warning him (by turning pale) when he was about to commit some shameful deed.] **Still these auxiliaries** : It must, however, be admitted that such helps have no moral efficacy ; they are contrivances purely physical (not moral) in their nature. **Expect more**—look for any really important assistance from them ; fancy that they can give us moral support. (*What they can give* is mentioned in the rest of the sentence.) **Aids to memory**—help us to remember what we have resolved to do—or how far we are carrying out the resolve. **They may form landmarks.....progress** : These helps are like mile-stones or definite features of the landscape, which tell us how far we have gone forward—*i.e.* may show us how much we have improved, if at all ; but they cannot enable us (unless there are higher influences to back them) to get more and more ahead—they have no motive power to make us go forward in the path of improvement.

**Para 9. In a similar spirit** : *i.e.* we should neither despise such considerations, nor make too much of them. **Prudential considerations**—reasons based on a cautious regard for the consequences of an action from the worldly point of view ; worldly reasons or motives, (as opposed to those of a higher kind—*e.g.* sense of duty, obedience to God's commandments. (The author tells us below what use we should make of such considerations.) **We may**

**listen.....upon them** : It is well to pay due heed to the dictates of worldly wisdom, and thus succeed in facilitating the work of self discipline ; but it is wrong to be content with such means—to rely solely on them. That is, we should always base our conduct on higher principles than those of worldly prudence, though we should not despise or reject the latter. **While.....fail**—though we ought. **Due use**—use to the extent required, or in a fitting manner—namely, as an aid to, but not the basis of, self-discipline.) **Never forget**—constantly bear in mind. **Do not go &c.**—fail to touch the deep or true source of the mischief ; are but superficial. [The reason for this statement is that prudential considerations do not appeal to the worthy motives of conduct, nor do they strengthen such motives ; and it is only through lofty principles of action that effective-self discipline can be attained.] **Conquer the world**—prosper in his earthly career ; succeed in acquiring wealth, power, or fame. **Rule.....heart**—bring his feelings and passions under control. **It may change.....another**—All that prudence can do is to conquer one passion by another perhaps no less bad—*e.g.* to check a thirst for degrading pleasures by avarice (for if a man dislikes to spend money he is forced to restrain his taste for vicious indulgences.) **Of potency enough**—sufficiently strong and powerful. **Change his nature**—reform his character. [The sentence means—It is only by strengthening the higher principles of action that we can remodel our character—mere prudence is too weak to effect this. All that prudence can do is to enable us to succeed in life, and to counteract one wrong impulse by another perhaps equally objectionable.]

**Para 10. Prayer.....self discipline**—prayer may always be depended upon to increase our power of bringing the passions under control. **Constant source**—never-failing means. **Invigoration**—strengthening (the mind) **Thoughtless**.—mechanical. **Thing of custom**—gone through merely as a matter of routine ; which we go on repeating day after day only because we (and others as well) have done so for a long while. **Sincere**—true outpouring of the heart. **Intense**—fervid ; comes of deep and strong feeling of one's own helplessness and of trust in the goodness and love of God.) **Watchful**—knows what it is about ; when one is careful to avoid uttering what he does earnestly long for. Thus watchful prayer must also be sincere, (See below—“Whether he really would have” &c.) [The author censures the practice of uttering set formulas or mantras in a mechanical way—however devout may be language and thought, and however lofty the moral tone, of the prayer which such formulas convey. It is only by sincere heartfelt prayer that the heart can be refined, and the power of controlling our passions increased.] **Let a man** : This explains what sincere prayer means. **Let him think** : When you pray that you may learn generously to forgive those who offend you, consider whether you are then really desirous of giving up the pleasure of indulging in anger. The refer

ence is to the words in what is called the *Lord's Prayer* : "Forgive our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us ;" and the author means that many people utter these words without reflecting that they are by no means prepared to act as they pray to be able to do—that indulgence in anger yields them a pleasurable excitement which they are unable to lose. **If not .....it is**—And if they are not prepared to cease indulging in anger, it is a revolting piece of blasphemy to pray for a forgiving disposition. For such prayer is insincere, and amounts to taking the name of God in vain.) **Mockery**—profanation ; making light of what is holy. **To think** : supply "How horrible it is" or words to that effect at the beginning of the sentence. **In the presence of**—when he stands before ; as he communes with. **Telling off**—mechanically repeating ; uttering as a mere matter of form (without reflecting on, or perhaps even understanding what he says. The reference is to the repetition of fixed forms of prayer, especially with the aid of a rosary or string of beads, prescribed in many religions—the most remarkable instance being the use of prayerwheels by many Buddhists. **Alone with** : How shocking it is to think that while he is supposed to hold communion in solitude with the Author of his being, a man should behave like a child going through a disagreeable duty forced on him, (or without understanding what he is about.) **Longing.....meaning** • (These words explain "like a child,")—merely anxious to have done with it (the task)—to finish the irksome duty as soon as possible,—and not caring to understand what he prays for. The sentence means—A soulless mechanical prayer is a piece of blasphemy of which a rational creature ought to be heartily ashamed ; to utter such a prayer is to behave like a child reciting a long tiresome lesson before a stern schoolmaster.

[The purport of this Essay is—Let not self discipline make you vain—know your own nature thoroughly and trace evil habits to the source of the mischief—try to attain a higher standard of duty—cultivate a liberal sympathetic spirit—neither neglect nor overestimate mechanical aids, or the teachings of prudence—Pray in an earnest, sincere spirit, avoiding soulless prayer as a mockery.]

## ESSAY IV.

### ON OUR JUDGMENT OF OTHER MEN.

**Substance** of the paragraphs :

1. Do not judge hastily of others ; human nature is a very ; difficult and complicated study.

2. Do not readily believe or help to circulate other people's judgment about any man, for it is often formed on utterly insuffi- (ii)  
cient grounds.



3. About public men, you may indeed accept the current sayings, but be not wholly carried away by them, as they may be, (i) founded on imperfect knowledge of the character discussed, (ii) inaccurate or incomplete as to the facts of conduct, (iii) inadequate as the basis of an impartial estimate, (iv) misleading when undue prominence is given to them, (v) formed upon the opinion of a few hasty thinkers only.

4. A general opinion is not necessarily more free from mistakes than your independent judgment.

5. Analysis of current opinions about men's character and conduct : (i) some are honest but wrong, through (a) imperfect information, (b) erroneous reasoning ; (ii) some are the result of prejudice, passion, caprice, and even ingenuity of those who judge ; (iii) some are based on misrepresentations arising from (a) imperfect hearing, (b) entire mistake, (c) inaccurate report of one unable to convey exactly what he heard ; (iv) some careless remarks in general conversation pass for weighty ones ; (v) some opinions arise from these various causes combined, and are then exaggerated by foolish people and circulated widely by "lazy gossips."

6. (i) Mean people, as Wollaston says, are readiest in inventing and spreading malicious reports. (ii) Few have the opportunity, the will, and the ability to represent facts truly (iii) Besides facts, the views of the person judged ought to be known, but these are often not known at all. (iv) Again the person judging may have false ideas as to what is right and what is wrong.

7. Most people are too unimaginative to allow for the prejudices of others, or to judge charitably ; their imagination is used merely to glorify themselves and their doings. Others do not give out their charitable judgments for fear of being thought stupid or credulous.

8. It is difficult to form an original estimate of others, because (i) our knowledge of facts is often insufficient, (ii) it is often based on exaggerated reports, (iii) we may misinterpret the motives of an action—*e.g.* attributing it to self-interest, without knowing, (a) what a man's interests really are, (b) what appear to him as such, whether he allows his interests to be sacrificed to his fancies, envy or wilfulness, as many people do.

9. The purposes of life, however, require that we should form opinions about others, and of the materials available the most reliable are their unimportant actions.

10. Some parts of a man's intellect are more easily made out than others—*e.g.* wit, acuteness, logical power. Judgment is harder, and practical wisdom hardest, to discover.

11. So again in a man's moral nature, selfishness egotism and disregard for truth are easily made out, whereas temper, tastes, and feelings require closer observation.

12. In some cases we are more liable to err than in others. The

assuming or seemingly scornful man is deeply hated and feared, though he may be tender-hearted and eager to enlist our sympathy and good opinion.

13. This holds true of characters utterly different from our own, which we are unable to appreciate.

14. The most unpardonable errors are however, those made in judging of those nearest to us. Finding that we have made up our minds about them, they behave to us artificially as they think we expect them to do, and never reveal their real feelings and character to us.

**Para 1. In forming.....judge**—When we arrive hastily at opinions or criticisms about other people, we not only act unjustly towards the object of our thoughtless remarks, but we do injustice to ourselves, by acting in a way unworthy of us. **Lightly**—without due consideration. **Wrong**—are unjust to. It is shown below how we wrong ourselves, *viz.* in lending countenance to what may be false, and failing to act in that considerate and charitable spirit which we exhibit on other occasions. It is perhaps also suggested that every improper action injures the character, if not one's reputation also. **In scattering.....general**.—When we utter such hasty unfair opinions freely, we enable them to live long in the tongues of men (for we cannot prevent others going on circulating the criticisms, even after we have recognised them to be unjust) and by lending countenance to what is false, we help to give a wrong turn to the prevailing opinion of the society we live in. [Thus suppose you enjoy a reputation for strict truthfulness or occupy a respectable position in society; you hear something said against another man, and without weighing its truth, you accept it and help to give it currency. People then quote you as an authority in favour of the calumny, which then gains greater credence than it might otherwise have done.] **Endow with**—confer upon. **Life**—vitality; credit and permanence. **Cannot take away**: Because calumny is very persistent and hard to kill, and even if we confess we were wrong in believing it—which is a very difficult and unpleasant thing to do,—our disclaimer would not command the same credence, and would be attributed to unworthy motives. **False witnesses**: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Eighth commandment, *Exodus*, xx. 16.) The expression also occurs in several other passages of the Bible, and severe punishment is prescribed in the Mosaic Law against false witnesses.\* **Pervert**—falsify; vitiate. **Who does.....matter**—

\*Cf.—“If the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother (*i.e.* fellow man), then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil from among you..... And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot”—*Deuteronomy*, xix. 18-21.



Every one realises the difficulty of correctly describing even a small part of his own character, because it is exceedingly complicated and many-sided. It is implied that since one's own nature is so hard to describe faithfully, one should realise how hopeless it is to understand fully another man's character, and how rash it is to pass an off-hand opinion on so intricate a subject—especially if the opinion is an unfavourable one, and likely to cause mischief. **And yet :** It is strange that a man who understands the difficulty of describing a part of one's own nature correctly, fails to do so in the case of another. He would probably, never think of talking at random on a subject requiring a knowledge of Botany or Geometry ; but he has no scruple in giving out his crude immature opinions about another man's character (which is quite as complicated as his own), as if he was entitled to say what he does say, by a thorough knowledge of that character. [The injustice and absurdity of pronouncing hasty judgments on others is very forcibly brought out here. Human nature is far more intricate subject than Botany or Geometry, as every one realises in his own case ; and yet no man ventures to make an ignorant assertion in any of these subjects, such as is so often and confidently done regarding the character and conduct of men. Compare : “If it were considered how utterly incompetent men are to talk of the conduct of others, as they do, the talkers would be silenced at once, and the sufferers as readily consoled.”—*Companions of My Solitude*, ch. x.] **At hazard**—without due knowledge ; *lit.* running the hazard or risk of saying something foolish. **Properties**—peculiar or distinguishing attributes. **Put forth**—utter ; give expression to. **Fullest authority**—perfectly reliable evidence or grounds.

**Para 2. But perhaps.....meet with**—One may say by way of an excuse, that he is not in the habit of passing such hasty judgments himself ; and that he simply accepts, with amiable credulity or easy-going belief, such remarks as he may have caught from some stray acquaintance. (In this sentence the tone is slightly ironical, it being implied that this excuse for circulating calumny is a most lame and miserable one, as he goes on to observe seriously in the sentences that follow.) **Wont**—accustomed ; given. **Pleased** and **obliging** are used ironically. *Pleased*—so good as. **Obliging credence**—gracious implicit faith ; easy credulity for which we deserve the thanks of the person whose words we take readily upon trust. (The word implies that it is uncivil to start a doubt or demand reasons.) **Such credulity** : This kind of easy belief—such readiness to believe a damaging report—is far from innocent ; *i.e.* it is most reprehensible. **We cannot think** : It is impossible to exaggerate the mischief likely to arise from readily yielding belief to such random or thoughtless remarks, and the absolute crime that there is in repeating such remarks as our own, as if we had personally tested and found them correct. The author means—

It is a most dangerous practice to believe without inquiry the hasty judgments of others and it is an unpardonable crime to lend our own authority to such sayings by repeating them as truths that we have arrived at after proper examination. Compare what Sir Peter Teazle says in Sheridan's great comedy :

*"Mrs Candour"* But surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear

*Sir Peter Teazle* Yes, madam, I would have the law merchant for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the bill was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come down on any of the endorsers"—*Sheridan's School for Scandal*, II. 2.

**Seriously**—severely. **Taking upon trust**—accepting without hesitation on the authority of others; believing without any attempt to ascertain the truth. **Positive**—downright; actual. **Assayed**—verified; confirmed. To assay is to test a piece of gold or silver to see if it is genuine or pure. **Observation**—personal knowledge. **How much ... repeating them**—some of those harsh unjust opinions which we adopt and repeat, so as to make them more weighty, often rest on such slender evidence—are so little grounded on fact,—that we should be heartily ashamed of having helped to give them currency. **Ashamed**: as we would then feel we were circulating falsehood, and injuring the innocent. *Lend the influence*: give the sanction &c: make more credible (as coming with the authority of our name.) **And even if..... condemnation**—And even in the case of sayings which we are justified in believing, we should pause before we circulate them—especially when the judgments are unfavourable. **Be in no hurry**—hesitate; think twice before &c. **Sentences of condemnation**—adverse opinions; severe censure of any man's conduct or character. **Maxim of this kind**—precept censuring hasty condemnation. **Thomas A Kempis**: 1380-1471, a pious monk, born at Kempen near Cologne, the reputed author of the famous work *De Imitatione Christi* (On the Imitation of Christ), a collection of passages inculcating the practice of christian virtues and exhorting the reader to lead a pious noble life. The work is distinguished from most religious books by its clearness, honesty, simplicity, and freedom from exaggeration and morbid sentiment; and this is why it is, "next to the Bible, the most universally translated book in the world"—the number of various translations and editions amounting to more than two thousand. **De prudentia**: Concerning wisdom in action. **Has given....merits**—has expressed as strongly as it deserves; has couched it in language as forcible as befits the importance of the subject. **Adhanc**: It also belongs to this (wisdom), not to believe whatever men say; nor to pour into the ears of others what one hears or believes. That is—Practical wisdom refuses not only to believe current reports, but to circulate them, even if believed.

**Para 3. Quite upon the surface of**--easily made out in ; quite manifest or patent in. **Obvious facts**--facts which every one can readily and correctly observe. **Being very.....world**--occupying a public position ; being conspicuous because of their rank and station in life. **Offer plenty &c.**--Give people many points or grounds on which to form an opinion about them. [The author speaks of the circumstances which warrant us in forming or adopting opinions about others. These are :--(1) obvious features of character ; (2) easily observed facts about conduct ; (3) persons who play conspicuous parts in the world's arena.] **Fairly induce**--reasonably lead. **Place credence in**--put your trust upon ; believe. **General opinion**--current or prevailing judgment. **Which, however** : Though you may have no opportunities for testing, or confirming such opinion by means of personal knowledge. **But in no case** : No circumstances, however, justify you in allowing yourself to be swayed too much by the prevailing opinions about &c. **Carried away**--induced to give up your own judgment altogether ; completely governed. [The sentence means that even under the above circumstances which justify you in believing the current opinion, you should not lose the power of judging the person concerned calmly and impartially--you should not cease to be charitable and dispassionate in speaking of the person condemned. The following sentences tell us the reason for this advice.] **If you do....mob**--If you permit yourself to "surrender judgment hoodwinked"--*i.e.* blindly follow others in condemning a man,--you simply make one in a crowd of foolish and violent people. **Form a mob**--swell the number of thoughtless and mischievous people. A mob is a disorderly crowd, generally led away by a cry, often wholly false, into committing all sorts of mischief--breaking the windows of obnoxious people, setting fire to their houses or maltreating them if they fall into their hands. Here a body of violent detractors and mischief-makers is called a mob. **Consider.....one of conduct**--you should take into account the nature of the assertions against a public man : you should consider that they rarely embrace all the features of the character which is pulled to pieces, or condemned wholesale ; that they rarely make up a complete case in a matter of conduct--*i.e.* they usually leave a great deal to be inquired into, as to the circumstances under which the condemned person acted. **Embody the character**--are founded upon a full knowledge of the man's nature. They are generally based on an exaggerated view of some defect of character. **Go far to exhaust**--approach an exhaustive or thorough treatment of. The current sayings against a public man generally fall much short of a complete description of the conduct censured. **It is well.....conclusions**--It is as much as can be expected, if these sayings correctly represent even one particular side or aspect of the matter, or if they furnish hints which a clear-headed and unbiassed mind can

use to arrive at some truths concerning the subject. Or in other words: The current sayings about public men generally fail to give a correct version even of a part of the question, and to supply reliable data on which to base one's inferences as to character or motives. **True in themselves**—correct as mere statements. **The prominence**: the exaggerated or extreme importance attached to them may be quite misleading—may lead people to think much worse of the person judged than he deserves. **Besides.....thinkers**: consider, further, that a great many of the sayings are necessarily based on the views of a small number of persons—namely some few hasty judges. [It is implied that most people are too indolent to inquire into, and form an independent judgment on any matter; and that the opinions of a small body of confident cock-sure thinkers often gain currency,—the rest merely catching up and echoing these crude opinions, which then acquire all the weight that belongs to “what everybody says.”]

**Para 4. You feel**: Suppose you realise the probability of falling into all sorts of error in trying to form an opinion for yourself—not based on what other people say: well then, you should not hastily conclude that current opinions are not erroneous—for many people are about as likely to fall into error, as a single thinker; and moreover current opinions are not always arrived at by many independent judges, though they often seem to be such. [See last sentence of the preceding para. In an Essay on Truth, Helps speaks of “those vague injurious reports which are no men's lies, but all men's carelessness.”]

**Para 5. If we come**: When we look closely into the nature and grounds of the judgments on other men, we are sure to find that many of these are erroneous though arrived at in good faith,—the error being due either to not knowing the facts thoroughly, or to wrong inferences from facts. **Sincerely**—*bona fide*; without any ill-will. **There will be others**: In other cases, wrong opinions are merely the outcome of prejudice and passion, caprice or eccentricity, and it may be of skilful invention (because some people want to show how cleverly they can argue or theorize about men's characters.) **Prejudices**—false notions—especially unreasonable and rooted dislike towards certain individuals or classes of men. **Ingenuity**: It is implied that some persons take delight in inventing subtle motives to which they attribute the actions of other people. **There.....grounded**: Then again, there are cases, in which false views spring from an altogether wrong apprehension of the facts; this misapprehension being due to either (1) the facts being but partially heard, (2) some grievous error or blunder, or (3) the utter inability of the person reporting the matter to understand what it is about, and hence to communicate to others at all correctly what he heard on the subject. **Then.....careless things**: Another source of error lies in the hasty remarks indulged in

when people meet and talk of all manner of subjects—these remarks having the authority or importance of deliberate judgments attached to them. **Careless things**—random or off-hand remarks. [Of those who habitually make such remarks about others, Helps says elsewhere: “Many of those who criticise much do not opine or judge, but only talk. There is too, a flow of criticism with some men, like the poetry of improvisatori, neither good nor altogether bad, having no deep meaning or purpose in it, being something like the talk of parrots, except that it lacks the force which belongs to repetition.”—*On Giving and Taking Criticism, Friends in Council, I.*] **Sometimes these**: Another set of false judgments are due to all these causes working together; so that currency is given to a judgment about some person's character and conduct which is arrived at by an incorrect mode of reasoning, on the part of people biassed against that person, and which rests on misrepresentation of facts, --the affair, moreover, being one which the persons judging cannot be expected to understand at all. The ignorant and utterly false judgment thus formed comes then to be exaggerated by foolish people, and circulated freely by idlers or busybodies who have nothing better to do. **Wrong method**: the method of reasoning is meant—e.g. jumping at a conclusion from utterly insufficient data, arguing from irrelevant premises, &c. **Inflated**—swollen; made to assume an absurdly high importance. Compare what he says in Para 3—“Again these sayings may be true in themselves, but the prominence given to them may lead to very false impressions.” **Blown about**—spread far and wide. In one of our author's latest works, *Animals and their Masters*, a humorous story is told of the definition a child gave of the word *scandal*. The definition, with Ellesmere's admiring comments, is as follows: “*Nobody does no hing* (mark the force of that double negative) *and everybody goes on* (note the continuity of slander) *telling of it everywhere* (no reticence you see, as regards time or place.)”

**Para 6. Wollaston**: William Wollaston (1659-1724) a satirical and theological writer of some note. His *Religion of Nature Delineated* is an attempt to prove the truth of religion on mathematical principles. **Repute**—reputation. **Mean people**—persons of a low station in life—especially servants. *Mean* may mean ‘low-minded,’ but the above is preferable—servants of different families being certainly in the habit of exchanging gossip, especially scandal, those who are unpopular with their servants receiving scanty justice or mercy on such occasions. **Propagate** (*lit.* breed)—spread; circulate. **Lay apace**—lay their eggs or spawn very fast. *Apace* is rather archaic, being usually confined to poetry now-a-days. **The less the faster**—the smaller the creatures are, the faster do they breed or bring forth young. **Have the opportunity &c.**—possess all the three requisites for giving a



true version to facts—namely favourable circumstances as well the moral and intellectual qualifications for the task. *Will* implies here a love of truth strong enough to triumph over vanity, envy &c ; and *ability* the purely mental qualities—*e. g.* power of observing, remembering, and reporting things correctly—needed for the work.

**Besides.....concerned**—Apart from the difficulty of correctly representing the facts, there are the circumstances hardly ever known except to the person judged, but which should be known and duly considered beforehand, to make the judgment just and rational.

**He may have... .breast**—It may be that his opinions, his ways of looking at certain affairs, may be altogether different from those of the critics ; and it may be that he keeps to himself his motives, feelings, and purposes. **Confined &c.**—utterly unknown to others.

**Or perhaps :** And though the men who indulge in comments on others assume a confident air, as if they are never wrong, it may be that they are quite mistaken, and condemn an action which is really the proper thing to do under the circumstances. **Censurer**—critic ; he who pronounces an unfavourable opinion. **Notwithstanding** .

this use of the word to mean *though*, is archaic.

**Para 7. Few ...people :** It is rare to meet with one sufficiently imaginative to understand and make allowances for the wrong notions under which other people labour, or to realise how other men might act under the influence of prejudices from which he himself is free—though he may have his own prejudices. [As the need for charity and toleration is one of the subjects which Helps is most anxious to circulate, we find in his other works several passages parallel to the present one. Thus, in *Companions of My Solitude*, he says : “ If we observe the difference of men’s natures, and consider the want of imagination in most men which confines them to the just appreciation of those natures only which are like their own, how much this complicates the question (of judging other men correctly.)” Again, in his *Friends in Council* Vol. I. —“ I have said that criticism has very frequently lacked imagination as well as charity and humility. In no respect will this combined deficiency be better perceived than in considering the way in which men persist in commenting upon the works of others from their own peculiar ground and point of view. They will not exercise a charitable imagination, and look at what is done with due regard to the doer’s drift and conception. Their own conceits perplex and stultify their judgment.”—*On giving and Taking criticisms.* And in *Friends in Council*, Vol. III. he says of those who criticise at their leisure what was done amidst great pressure of business, as public men have to act under—“ They are apt to forget that the person criticised was placed in very different circumstances from themselves and it requires a great exercise of their imagination to throw themselves into his position before they begin to criticise.” (*Essay on Criticism.*) **Perhaps however :** It is probably more



correct to say that people are not accustomed to use their imagination in such a way as would enable them to take a favourable view of other men's actions. Or more briefly : People may have imagination, but they do not generally exercise it so as to help them to judge charitably of others. **Most persons require.....effort**—(Here the above sentence is expanded and illustrated, and the reason is given why few men employ their imagination in the service of charity.)—The imagination of most people is used, as a magician's wand, to build for them golden castles in the air—*i. e.* to enable them to indulge in gorgeous visionary schemes,—to dream that they are taking a prominent part in some glorious triumphs ; to fancy themselves achieving victory at small cost or effort ; and to look upon themselves as men of great virtue, without being at the trouble of doing any worthy deeds. The sentence is mildly satirical.) **Require its magic aid**—call upon the wonderful power of imagination. **Gild &c.**—raise for themselves splendid visions of future wealth, power, or fame. **Triumphal**—in honour of a great victory ; celebrating some great achievement (of any kind) on their part. **Without battles**—without any sacrifice of men or money ; with perfect ease (as in Caesar's famous campaign, described laconically in the words *Veni, vidi, vici*) **Without effort**—without putting forth any exertions, or practising any self-denial. **This is what** :—As their imaginative power is wholly taken up in this sort of thing, they have no part of it left for such trifling business as thinking well of their fellow creatures (ironical.) **Spare it** : have no imagination to spare, or in reserve. **Errand of charity**—exercise of charitable judgment ; attempt to judge in a kindly or tolerant spirit. **And sometimes** : Another reason (why charitable judgments on others are so rare) "is that some men who do not think harshly of others, shrink from giving out favourable judgments, lest they should be looked upon as simpletons or dupes—men easily deceived. He who professes to think more favourably of a man generally condemned, is liable to be looked down upon as a greenhorn—one ignorant of the ways of the world ; to avoid this, one is tempted to echo the prevailing opinion against a man. **Credulous**—too ready to believe (a man to be good).

**Para 8. Adopting**—accepting ; believing (without inquiry) and repeating as one's own. **But suppose.....we speak**—Let us, however, examine more minutely how difficult it is to arrive at correct opinions of our own on such a subject—the difficulty being all the greater when we are not friends or acquaintances of the person judged. **We seldom know** : we have generally poor and inaccurate information upon which to base our opinion ; and even a slight error as to facts may vitiate our judgment, in estimating the motives of conduct (Motives are so subtle and hard to make out correctly, that we are likely to attribute a man's conduct to altogether wrong motives, if our knowledge of the facts of the case

is incorrect in even a small particular.) **Investigate** (from *vestigio* —to follow a track)—inquire carefully into ; search out. **But the report :** Unfortunately, the account currently given of an affair sometimes contains so many omissions and exaggerations, as to convey an utterly false impression ; it is like the elaborate flourishes in music which completely disguise the original tune, so that even the original composer of that tune is unable to make it out. **Variation**—ornamental changes or embellishments of a tune, which are slightly varied at every repetition. The singer indulges in these to exhibit his skill in music—to show off his powers and excite applause. **Simple air**—the tune stripped of these complicated flourishes. **Shakes**—trills, or rapid trembling series of notes (in singing.) It is a favourite device with musical performers to sing in a tremulous voice especially to indicate emotion. **Flourishes**—decorative notes added by a musician. [The simile may be expanded thus : As a tune is so effectually disguised by the elaborate flourishes of a musical performer, as not to be recognised even by the original composer or author of it ; so the elaborate additions and alterations to the real facts found in the current version of an affair make it impossible even for the person concerned to make out that the story is about himself.] **Then...know**—another difficulty is that we cannot be certain that we understand the real meaning or true motive of those actions, even if the facts concerning them are known precisely as they took place. **Rightly interpret**—correctly make out the significance, or bearing upon character, of. **Perhaps.....explain an action**—We are likely to attribute a man's actions above all to a desire to secure his own advantage, when we try to interpret them. Or —In seeking to account for a man's actions, we are often most ready to suppose that he was actuated by some motive of personal interest—that his object was to acquire money, power, or praise. **But we have scarcely ...to be**—What we know of another man's character and circumstances is almost always so imperfect, that it is very difficult to make sure what is really good for him, and still more so to understand what he himself looks upon as such (for few men understand or pursue their true interests—the world would be a much better and happier place than it is, if many people could do so.) **Much less :** Supply “are we able to decide.” The construction is rather loose. **Besides, a man's fancies :** It should, moreover, be borne in mind that we constantly find men allowing their interests to be injured and borne down by their caprice, envy and obstinacy. (Few even are so wise as consistently to pursue their own interests ; people often sacrifice their interests to gratify their fancies &c. **Interfere**—come into conflict, clash. **Override**—get the better of. **He will know :** It will probably be found that a man knows he allows his interests to be thus sacrificed ; and that he seeks to keep this weakness from the knowledge of others, by pretending to have certain.

selfish ends, which might serve to explain why he acts in the way he feels disposed to do (for he does not like to be thought a fool, who is blind to his own interests. As Helps says in his first work, *Thoughts in the Cloister and the Crowd*,—"It would often be as well to condemn a man unheard, as to condemn him upon the reasons he openly avows for any course of action."

**Para 9.** **It is well .....require it**—Though it is certainly desirable that we should adequately realise how hard it is to judge correctly of others ; it is nevertheless often necessary that we should make up our minds about a man's worth, and it sometimes happens that we have very little time to form such a judgment ; we cannot get on in the world without doing so. **Impressed with a sense of**—alive to ; made to feel. **Purposes of life**—various worldly ends or objects (*e.g.* when we have to choose an agent or subordinate.) **Materials**—data ; *viz.* facts or circumstances from which inferences about character may be drawn. **Are aware of**—think we have. (The author says this to show that the judgments we are obliged to form need not always be baseless or unjust, for we are often mistaken in fancying that there are no reliable facts to go upon.) **We must not imagine** : It would be wrong to suppose that the facts which should be known must be hidden far beneath the surface, or difficult to make out ; on the contrary, they are often obvious enough (though they might escape the notice of a careless observer, who does not understand their significance.) **Deep-seated**—not easily fathomed. **Recondite** (from *L. re* back and *condo* to put up or conceal) —profound ; such as to require close inquiry or thought. **Lie .....surface**—are superficial ; are readily found. **Indeed, the primary ...unconsciously**—It may be safely asserted that the essential or fundamental traits of character are more readily made out from circumstances of a rival kind—from little details ; for in petty matters, a man is off his guard—he does not reflect what people might think of his conduct, and so acts spontaneously. **Primary character**—leading features of character (as contrasted with those which are grafted by education, self control, converse with the world &c. and which may be called *secondary* or acquired traits.) **Discernible**—capable of being observed ; indicated. **Trifles** : Thus, from the tone in which a man speaks to his servants, or the manner in which he accosts an inferior, we can make out whether he is proud and imperious, or the reverse ; the way in which he receives and replies to words of praise or compliment, enables us to discover whether he is vain ; his tone and manner in speaking of other men,—especially of public men of a different party and those whom he hears praised—indicate pretty clearly whether he is charitable and tolerant, or envious and censorious. See also para 11. **Unconsciously**—spontaneously. **It is upon** : If we properly note and examine these trifles, we are likely to be successful to a great extent, in understanding the character of

any particular man. Or—a correct appreciation of any man's nature must be principally based on the right method of &c. **You may :** A short conversation with a man may enable you to know him better than if a correct sketch of his past life were forthcoming (for such a sketch would give you only the principal events and actions of his life, and these, we are told below, are comparatively valueless as a means of understanding one's character.) **The most important.....his nature**—the most striking actions of a man may furnish comparatively faint indications of character ; because in performing them he is guided not so much by his true character, as by various other influences ( especially by considering how such actions might appear in the eyes of the world.) [In reply it may be said that if a man acts chiefly out of deference to the opinions of the world, that shows him to be a world-fearing character ; but this also would be a rash inference, for it may be that he pays so much regard to the world's opinions only in the case of important actions.] **Anything but**—far from being ; certainly not. **Significant of the man**—fitted to convey a true conception of a man's character ; reliable as grounds on which to judge of &c. **To understand that ;** I am inclined to think that a man's nature may be more correctly inferred even from a faithful likeness, than from some few of his most conspicuous actions—so little reliance can be placed on the latter. [On this subject, Helps says in his *Thoughts in the Cloister and the Crowd* : “ It is quite impossible to understand the character of a person from one action, however striking that action may be. The youngest mathematician knows that one point is insufficient to determine a straight line, much less any thing so curve-like as the character of even the most simple and upright of mankind. *If you are obliged to judge from a single action, let it not be a striking one.*” And in *Friends in Council*, he speaks of the “ foolish belief that individual words or actions constitute the whole life of man ; whereas they are often not fair representatives of portions even of that life”—*Essay on Remorse.*] **Indeed if men.....each other**—So difficult is it to understand character from a man's actions that we should be quite unable to decide how to get on with others, but that the way in which men behave, their looks and ordinary department tell us much of their character. Or—Men betray the leading features of their character in their behaviour, looks and carriage on ordinary occasions ; but for this we should not know how to get on with them ; because from their striking actions it is impossible to understand what sort of men they are.

**Para 10. In judging :** certain traits of a man's moral and intellectual nature can be readily made out, while to find out others long and minute examination is necessary ; and it is exceedingly desirable to attend to this difference in forming opinions about other men. **In the intellect :** Thus in regard to a man's intellectual powers, it is easy to note whether he is witty, sharp and subtle,

or capable of close reasoning. **It is not easy** : But it is much more difficult to find out if he possesses the power of forming sound opinions. **And it requires** : Still more difficult is it to make out whether he has practical wisdom ; it is only after long and close examination that this is possible—practical wisdom requiring a combination of rare qualities, both moral and intellectual. (It is only by watching how a man advises or acts under difficult and delicate circumstances, that this can be made out, and the opportunity for observing this may not occur).

**Para 11. Egotism**—disposition to think and speak too much of one's own self ; undue self-assertion. **Exaggeration**—habit of magnifying or giving over-coloured version to anything (so as to misrepresent.) **Carelessness**—indifference. **Come.....conclusion**—infer or judge correctly. **Of his tastes** : Some of his likings and dislikes are obvious, but others are kept concealed ; because most people are disposed to keep to themselves their most intimate likings (because it wounds them to find these laughed at or disapproved of by others). **Certain reserve**—some reticence, or reluctance to disclose. **Nations differ** : some differences are observable even between two nations as to the usual manner in which they exhibit their feelings ; much greater is the difference likely to be found among individuals (so that when a man does not express sorrow, anger or pleasure in the way I do, it is natural for me to conclude that he has not the feeling in question at the time. As to national differences, it is well known, for instance that while Italians (as well as the French, the Irish and the Keltic race freely exhibit their feelings, Englishmen are generally reserved and undemonstrative . '

[The subject of this and the preceding paragraph is thus dealt with in the author's essay on criticism in *Friends in Council*, vol. III :—“ That part of criticism which consists of comments upon the conduct of others, is where critics and commentators are most likely to be utterly deceived. You do not want much converse with a man to be able to judge pretty fairly about his behaviour. A man of fine manners is discerned at once to be a man of fine manners. You do not want to hear a man tell more than two or three anecdotes in order to decide whether he is a good narrator. One touch of humorousness betrays a ‘fellow of infinite humour.’ A bore seldom ceases to be a bore in any half hour's conversation. Sitting but once with a man in a committee, or on a council, may enable you to discover whether he is a just person or not. But when you come to decide upon a man's conduct, there is often some little circumstance or other, which, if once known to you, would charge the whole current of your thought about him, and cause you to start back with horror at the rash judgments you have been pronouncing upon him. You suppose him to be mean, and he is very poor—a poverty caused by undiscovered generosity.....Depend



upon it—we are mostly doing a longsighted as well as a kind thing when we decline to pronounce upon other men's conduct, and when we endeavour to reserve our judgment, let appearances be ever so greatly against them.”]

**Para 12. Peculiarly liable to err**—there is greater likelihood of our falling into a mistake. **Thus I think** : Take as an instance, the case of men who irritate us by laying claim to any kind of excellence, or to especial consideration ; we can hardly help feeling much greater aversion to such men than they deserve. **Disproportionate to**—exceeding what is due to. **Demerits**—faults ; shortcomings. **Pretension**—giving themselves airs. **We are apt** : The cause of this dislike is often a mistake—it arises from our supposing that such people look down upon us, though it may be that they assume such airs simply because they are anxious we should think highly of them (and so deserve pity rather than dislike . **There are people.....to please**—We are liable to error in judging of men who show on the surface—make disagreeably manifest,—their most repulsive traits ; some wound our feelings of self-esteem (by putting themselves forward) ; others make us feel afraid they will outshine us, or be dangerous rivals ; when we are thus governed by self-love or fear, it is natural we should lose sight of the fact, that a man who seems to think poorly of others may in many cases be really sympathetic and compassionate, and that a man who gives himself airs may be one really anxious to please others and gain their good-will—to be a general favourite. (A man who desires popularity may make the mistake of showing undue eagerness to attract admiration, and thus come to be harshly judged as a man full of pretension.)

**Para 13. Then there are** : Again some people possess natures so different from ours, that it is quite impossible for us to estimate them aright, and to think as well of them as they deserve. **A man who** : Thus it is almost impossible for a man wanting in humour, to appreciate another who possess it. **Humour**—sense of the ludicrous. One who wants humour is a matter-of-fact person, who takes everything seriously, cannot understand a joke, and is offended by many things which are not meant to give offence. [Compare : “ Probably the difference of temperament amongst men is a great as that amongst the different species of animals—as between that, for instance, of the lively squirrel and the solemn crane. Now, if only from this difference between them the squirrel would be a bad judge of the felicity, or generosity, or the domestic conduct, of the crane.”—*Companions of My Solitude*, ch. x. Again in *Friends in Council* vol. I., occurs Ellesmere's fable of a conversation “ between a complacent poplar and a grim old oak.” : “ The poplar said that it grew up quite straight heavenwards, that all its branches pointed the same way ;.....and turning to the oak, it went on to say that those warped and twisted branches seemed to show



strange struggles. The tall thing concluded by saying that it grew very fast, and that when it had done growing, it did not suffer itself to be made into huge floating engines of destruction ; but different trees had different tastes. There was then a sound from the old oak, like an *ah* or a *whew*.....and the gaunt creature said that it had ugly winds from without and cross-grained impulses from within ; that it knew it had thrown out awkwardly a branch here and a branch there, which would never come quite right again it feared ; that men worked it up, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil— but that at any rate it had not lived for nothing. The poplar began immediately, for this kind of tree can talk for ever, but I patted the old oak approvingly and went on.”]

**Para 14. But of all :** The mistakes we often fall into in estimating our servants and near relations, are the most mischievous and unpardonable. **They think.....expect :** Such errors are all the more difficult to correct, because those nearest to us feel that we have quite decided what to think about them (*i. e.* they feel it is hopeless to try to alter our judgments about them), and they are likely, in consequence of this belief, to behave to us not as is natural for them, but merely such as they know we expect them to behave. That is, their behaviour becomes artificial, and so perpetuates the error we have fallen into. **Perhaps too :** Another possible reason is that. **Fear us :** It is of younger brothers, sons, daughters &c., and also perhaps of servants, that the author speaks here. **Cannot sympathise :** Because our natures are quite different from theirs,—or we are so unimaginative as to be unable to look at things from their point of view. **And so..... market place**—The result is, that we continue to labour under delusions, and speak of fanciful or unreal beings when we think we are talking of them as they really are ; the words that pass between them and ourselves are never confidential—never the language of the heart,—but only deal with the ordinary affairs of life, such as may be said in public ; and yet we foolishly fancy that we understand their natures (simply because we see them everyday.) **Or if they do :** If they do say anything else—anything about their feelings,—it is not what they really think and feel ; their words are like those of actors playing certain parts, with certain artificial gestures (taken to represent particular feelings, with which to bring out the full meaning of those words ; for they would regard it absurd—almost an act of madness—to let us hear their real thoughts and feelings. **A part :** *viz.* the character we have erroneously come to attribute to them. **Set down in certain words**—written down, as it were, for them to repeat ; *i. e.* the words which we expect them to utter. **Eked out**—fully expressed. The movements of an actor’s arms &c. help the spectators to understand the feelings meant to be exhibited, which the words by themselves cannot adequately convey. **Affection**—feeling. For instance,

walking up and down with folded arms, is a stage convention to express violent agitation ; resting the head on the palm a sign of anxiety and dejection. **Who would :** The construction of this sentence, especially the placing of this clause, is rather awkward and inelegant. **Mad :** because they have long ceased to hope for sympathy on our part, and never dream of telling us their real thoughts &c. any more than an actor would think of throwing aside (while on the stage) the part he is playing and talk in his real character to the audience. [The substance of this sentence is—We go on entertaining false notions about those nearest to us, because either they never talk to us except on commonplace or business matters, or exhibit in their words only such feelings, tastes &c., as we have come to attribute to them, like so many players on the stage.] What the author says here is especially true of the behaviour of younger brothers, sons, daughters or other relations, towards a despotic or reserved head of the family, and may be illustrated by what is constantly witnessed in the domestic life of the people of this country.

## ESSAY V.

### ON THE EXERCISE OF BENEVOLENCE.

#### Summary :—

1. Though there are so many things to bring their benevolence into play, many persons either devote themselves wholly to their selfish ends, or while reluctantly observing the forms or foolish usages of society, indulge in useless musing or empty dreams.

2. There are innumerable works of benevolence one might engage in. Even if one sets himself to collect information on one of these subjects, he may shape opinion and help to introduce a remedy.

3. It would not do to say it is difficult to choose what you should set about doing ; for (i) some such work is pretty sure to be brought near to you by reason of your position or profession, and (ii) what you read or think about is sure to enlist your sympathies and interest.

4. Do not be content with remaining a mere spectator of the evils and miseries of society, trusting vaguely to some great agency—*e. g.* Time,—to provide a remedy.

5. In order to be able to do good, you must be ready to avail yourself of an opportunity when it comes ; for benevolence requires method and activity—not mere indolent sympathy with our suffering fellow creatures.

6. You should not wait till you have the power of doing good. When you are in a high position, acting in the eyes of the world, and engrossed in business, you will be unable to do much good unless you have collected information &c. beforehand. It will be time then to *apply* the results of your inquiries into facts and principles, not to begin the inquiry.

7. It is no excuse to say, as worldly men do, that works of benevolence interfere with a man's regular work ; for (i) God surely intends that we should find time to do good ; (ii) much of our time and energy—so often wasted in vain fancies &c.—might be applied to the pursuit of active benevolence.

8. Active benevolence may indeed prevent a man from acquiring a reputation for excellence and thus interfere to some extent, with advancement in life. But Christianity requires its followers to be ready to sacrifice their interests, when necessary, for the sake of others, and to labour zealously for their good.

9. Kindness to animals is a worthy object of benevolence. The fact that the lower animals have only this life—a very short one with many kinds of creatures—to enjoy, should make us pity them all the more. It is absurd to think one has a right to ill-use domestic animals—God's creatures as they all are—because he has brought them.

10. You should not, for fear of ridicule, let others treat animals cruelly. Even slight acts of humanity are precious in the sight of God.

**Para 1. With the most.....sorrow**—It is strange that, though there are so many worthy objects of benevolence which they cannot help observing, people should be found to spend most of their time all through life, in trying to acquire money or knowledge, in longing for favourable openings or chances to enable them to rise in worldly position, or in foolishly cherishing some grief for which there is no remedy. **Engaging**—fitted to enlist the sympathy. **Benevolence**—*lit.* 'wishing well' or good-will ; disposition or desire to promote the well-being of others. The author seems to use the word as equivalent to *beneficence* (*lit.* well-doing) *i. e.* active goodness, kindness, or charity. **Consume**—waste. **Sighing**—indulging in regrets 'that such opportunities do not come to them.) **Doting over**—fondly indulging in ; clinging to with weak excessive attachment (such as old men show towards unworthy objects.) *Dote*—usually followed by *on*—meant originally 'to take a nap as old men, whose brain has been impaired by age, are in the habit of doing ; hence 'to love to excess or extravagance.' *Dotage* is used of second childhood—senility, or the childish silliness of very old men. **Unavailing**—vain, or useless. When sorrow is of no avail—when it is past all cure,—to persist in indulging it is called *doting*. **Or, as it :** Others again, instead of living worthily in doing good to their fellow men, seem to be busy

in painfully observing current usages and foolish fashions ; though their thoughts are devoted to visionary schemes, or to elaborate castle-building in which they give free play to their imagination [Com. para 7 of the preceding essay—"to gild their castles in the air" &c.] **Outwardly**—so far as their external life is concerned. **Slaving over**—going reluctantly through ; conforming slavishly or blindly to. **Forms**—prevailing ceremonies or practices. *Forms and follies* may be taken to form one idea—foolish forms. The author refers to levées, balls, receptions, dinners, garden-parties &c. in which many people find no pleasure, but have to undergo much expense, vexation, and loss of time. Compare : "Think of the people that are 'presenting their compliments' and 'requesting the honour' and 'much regretting'—of those that are pinioned at dinner tables or stuck up in ball-rooms, or cruelly planted in pews." (Ellesmere in *Friends in Council*, vol. I.) **Given up to**—absorbed in ; constantly employed in. **Of vanity**—(i) vain ; idle ; empty ; (ii) due to their vanity, or the extravagant notions they entertain of their own worth and prospects. The first meaning seems preferable, though (ii) may be supported by the passage in the preceding essay (para 7) already referred to. **Long-drawn**—spun out to a great length ; prolonged. The word is probably borrowed from Gray's "Long-drawn aisle" (*Elegy*) or Milton's "Linked sweetness long drawn out" (*L'Allegro*.) **Reveries**—brown-studies ; musings or waking dreams (of attaining wealth, power, or fame). **And yet** : It is strange that people should waste their lives in this, while there are so many opportunities of doing good—so many cries of pain, scenes dreadful to imagine, and all manner of distress, which they cannot help seeing and hearing, but do not seem to feel—which never touch their hearts.

**Para 2. Boundless occupations**—endless work. **Consider the masses** : (Here we have a list of various objects fitted to bring an Englishman's benevolence into exercise).—To realise how extensive is the field for the exercise of benevolence, we may consider (1) how innumerable operatives or working men are living in helpless misery in the great centres of industry (such as Manchester) and other thickly populated towns—(2) how extremely poor the cottiers of Ireland are—(3) how shocking is the condition of slaves in countries where slavery still prevails—(4) how deplorable is the condition of the lower classes almost everywhere—(5) how little progress mass-education has made—(6) how false reasonings and misrepresentations of facts are freely permitted to work all possible mischief—(7) how many improvements both in law and administration are urgently needed, but not being such as the people are likely to clamour for, require careful attention and unremitting effort on the part of men who really understand the spirit and the wants of the age. **Masses &c.** This topic (like most of the other subjects enumerated here) was one of those always

in painfully observing current usages and foolish fashions ; though their thoughts are devoted to visionary schemes, or to elaborate castle-building in which they give free play to their imagination [Com. para 7 of the preceding essay—"to gild their castles in the air" &c.] **Outwardly**—so far as their external life is concerned. **Slaving over**—going reluctantly through ; conforming slavishly or blindly to. **Forms**—prevailing ceremonies or practices. *Forms and follies* may be taken to form one idea—foolish forms. The author refers to levées, balls, receptions, dinners, garden-parties &c. in which many people find no pleasure, but have to undergo much expense, vexation, and loss of time. Compare : "Think of the people that are 'presenting their compliments' and 'requesting the honour' and 'much regretting'—of those that are pinioned at dinner tables or stuck up in ball-rooms, or cruelly planted in pews." (Ellesmere in *Friends in Council*, vol. I.) **Given up to**—absorbed in ; constantly employed in. **Of vanity**—(i) vain ; idle ; empty ; (ii) due to their vanity, or the extravagant notions they entertain of their own worth and prospects. The first meaning seems preferable, though (ii) may be supported by the passage in the preceding essay (para 7) already referred to. **Long-drawn**—spun out to a great length ; prolonged. The word is probably borrowed from Gray's "Long-drawn aisle" (*Elegy*) or Milton's "Linked sweetness long drawn out" (*L'Allegro*.) **Reveries**—brown-studies ; musings or waking dreams (of attaining wealth, power, or fame). **And yet** : It is strange that people should waste their lives in this, while there are so many opportunities of doing good—so many cries of pain, scenes dreadful to imagine, and all manner of distress, which they cannot help seeing and hearing, but do not seem to feel—which never touch their hearts.

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uppermost in the mind of the author, and forms the principal subject of his latest work—*Social Pressure*—and is repeatedly touched upon in the *Friends in Council*, where one of the characters, Milverton, is represented as a philanthropist always studying or devising plans for the amelioration of the condition of his fellow-men. [The condition of the working classes in the manufacturing towns of England in the first half of the present century was extremely pitiable and shocking—especially before the Factory Acts came into existence ; the operatives with their wives and children, lived in horrible filth, immortality, and privation—being subjected, besides, to such grinding toil as brought on premature death and even a deterioration of the race.] **Left.....devices**—left to shift for themselves ; helplessly seeking to find some remedy for their distress. [It is implied that the working men were little better than slaves, being at the mercy of the employers or capitalists, who were masters of the situation—able to dictate their own terms to those they employed ; for the latter would starve if out of employ, and would be prevented, by the intense competition due to the great increase of their own numbers, from obtaining higher wages. The justice and necessity of improving the condition of the operatives, raising their wages and reducing the hours of toil, are strongly urged by socialistic writers and the friends of labour at the present day ; but there can be no doubt that by means of the Factory Acts, the repeal of the Corn Laws (which has greatly diminished the price of bread in England), the efforts of Trade unions, &c., the condition of the labouring-classes has been considerably improved during the last fifty years.] **Destitute peasantry** : The poverty of the Irish cultivators—called *cottiers*—is almost proverbial ; they have large families as a rule, the rent they agree to pay to the landlord often exceeds the whole produce (in average years) of the small area they take on lease, and they are generally in hopeless arrears—subsisting on the potato grown on small patches of ground adjoining their cottages—and liable to be turned out of their holdings, with certain starvation staring them and their families in the face. Certain recent changes in the law have effected some improvement in their condition, at least in some parts of Ireland ; but the demand for Home Rule derives its strength from the widespread discontent amongst the Irish peasantry, **Destitute**—wanting the bare necessities of life. **Sister-land** : The use of this word is meant to express the claim that the people of Ireland have on the sympathies of Englishmen. **Horrors of slavery** : A great part of the second volume of the *Friends in Council* is devoted to this subject—the heads under which it is treated being : (1) that Slavery is cruel ; (2) that slavery is needless ; (3) that slavery is unauthorized ; (4) that slavery is mischievous ; (5) that the preceding propositions apply to all races. **Wherever** : Slavery still prevails in most parts of Africa, and some parts of Asia and



**America.** England has abolished slavery in her own colonies &c, and is still making considerable efforts to put it down in other parts of the earth. **General aspect**—prevailing condition. **Pervading**—widespread ; met with everywhere. **Fallacies**—sophistries ; erroneous reasoning. [For instance, there are writers and speakers in England, America &c., who try to convince the people that the upper classes are their enemies, always seeking to oppress them; that it is very unjust that some people should possess great wealth and comfort, while the working classes (whose labour produces this wealth) are in such a wretched state of poverty ; that if the wealth of the few be divided amongst the many, the latter would be permanently benefited (this may be shewn to be false by working a simple arithmetical sum) ; that if every person in the state were possessed of the right to vote (*e. g.* in electing members of Parliament) and could interfere in the affairs of government, all misery would be at an end. In this country, the reasoning often employed in discussions on political matters—in attributing utterly wrong motives and policy to the Government, &c.—is often of this fallacious character. Then again, there are, on the one hand, enthusiasts who fancy all the evils of society might be remedied by adopting one or another of the “reforms” they are always advocating ; and, on the other, the apathetic or cynical men who ridicule all ideas of reform, who fancy that the condition of their ancestors was the ideally best, and who either actually suppose a return to the old regime both possible and desirable, or merely deplore that the good old times are gone for ever. **Unchecked**—without any restraint. **Legal reforms** : *e. g.* improvements in the law, enabling suitors to obtain redress with less expense and delay, or preventing real offenders from escaping punishment by some legal technicality. **Executive** : such reforms as secure purity and efficiency of administration—*e. g.* prevent the waste of public money by corrupt officials, the appointment of unworthy men, or abuse of official patronage, &c. **Not likely** : because the public are often ignorant or apathetic in such matters. **Popular impulse**—agitation or active discontent on the part of the people ; pressure of public opinion. **Those.....insight**—men fitted to lead or form public opinion ; men possessed of political wisdom. **By employing himself upon**—If he studies thoroughly (*i. e.* acquires information upon, or draws public attention to). **What is doing**—what is being done (whether any effective steps are being taken to remedy the evils, &c.) **A man of real information** : The man who really knows much about a subject is looked upon as an authority on that subject ; his opinion comes to be adopted by an increasing number of men, and by and by leads to something being done. **Centre of opinion**—one who brings others round to his own strong views.

**Para 3. Indeed, one** : In fact the difficulty is to make one's choice amongst so bewildering a multitude of objects of benevolence ;

and it is even more difficult to decide how to set about working at it. **Point of action**—base of operations : spot from which to start in a career of benevolence). **To which** : to this objection. **Family of man**—human race. **Brought near** &c. made deeply interesting to you by reason of your rank, position, or the experiences you have gone through. **Near**—home **If not, still** : Even if circumstances have not enlisted your sympathy in any particular cause, it would not be right for you to do nothing till some congenial work turns up—something very apt or agreeable to your fancy. [For it is very unlikely that any new work of the kind will be exactly what you like ; if you wait for such a chance, you will probably have to wait for ever. Compare what the author says of waiting for *dainty duties, pleasant to the imagination*, on p. 1. of the *Essays*.] **Apposite**—suitable ; to your taste. **The first that comes** : let the very first subject that offers itself be your choice (it does not matter what it is ; the more you delay and hesitate, the more difficult will it be for you to find a suitable kind of work). **Trace it** &c.—See how the question affects different parts of the world ; or try to make out how far the evil sought to be remedied extends, what consequences it produces &c. **And see.....heart**—And then you are sure to find that the subject interests you deeply. **Come to your heart**—touch your feelings ; rouse your sympathy. **How listlessly** : When we look at the map of a country we have never travelled in, we do so with perfect indifference—without feeling the slightest interest. **Listlessly**—apathetically ; carelessly. **With what satisfaction** : even a rough sketch of the map of a country we have travelled through gives us great pleasure in examining—for the names of the places indicated rouse pleasant recollections of what we have seen with our own eyes. [The simile in these two sentences may be completed thus : Similarly, all accounts, opinions &c. about a subject we have never studied fail to interest us, while the merest mention of a subject we have thought and read much about is sure to arouse our attention, and to be eagerly listened to or read. **Earnestly**—seriously and diligently. **Investigate**—inquire into. **Sincerely**—with a real desire to apply your energies to the work (and not merely to show others that you are a philanthropist—to produce a favourable impression on other people). **There.....heraldry**—Some people have been known to be immensely interested in heraldry—i. e. in the genealogies, armorial bearings &c. of different families. **Enthusiasts**—ardent specialists. **Heraldry**—the art or profession of a herald, who records and proclaims the arms (variously coloured devices on the shields &c.) of the families of nobles and the gentry. **Devoted** : made the game of chess the principal business or study of their lives. **Is the welfare**—If men can thus take deep interest in subjects so removed from human sympathy as heraldry or chess, much more easy must it be to

bring ourselves to feel interest in a subject affecting the well-being of men—living creatures capable of thinking and suffering, and possessed of immortal souls. **Argent and azure** : white and blue—terms used in heraldry to indicate the colour of particular parts of the shield. **Knights move** : the piece called *Knight* in chess, moves in a curious oblique manner. **Progress of a pawn** : a pawn or foot-soldier, the weakest of the Chess-men, can only move forward one step, but takes an opponent's man diagonally in front.

**Para 4.** [Having noticed in the preceding paragraph the perplexity and apathy which prevent many people from commencing a career of benevolence, the author takes, in this para, the case of those who feel sympathy for their fellow-men, but are inclined to despair of any remedy, and to rely on Time, Progress of Civilization, &c.] **Tenderly**—so as to be pained (by the sight or thought of human distress.) **Deeply**—to the bottom of their hearts. These are the men who are not stirred to the depths of their nature by sympathy—and therefore do not feel compelled to make any active efforts. **But this feeling** : The sympathy they feel is however not such as to lead them to put forth any efforts except for those who belong to the small body of their own associates. [Their active benevolence is restricted within a very small sphere—beyond that they do not feel called upon to do anything. These are the men of narrow sympathies—who abound in all countries, but nowhere perhaps more than in this. We constantly hear people reply, when asked to assist in some work of charity or public good, “What is that to me?”—though they may not be selfish or heartless in their own little world.] **They have little faith** : They do not believe that any personal efforts of their own can at all lessen or cure any great evil affecting large masses of mankind—e.g. slavery, war, the degraded condition of women, drunkenness, &c. **Faith in**—belief in the efficacy of. **If an evil of magnitude** : Sometimes they cannot help observing a mighty evil and recognising it as such ; in such cases they save themselves from the necessity of doing anything by means of the pleasant belief that the evil will correct itself when men grow better and wiser, or at least will be remedied by some agency of so vague or comprehensive a nature, that they need have nothing to do with it. **Take shelter in**—spare themselves all anxiety or effort with. **Comfortable**—optimistic ; pleasing (slightly ironical). **Course of events**—Time. **Too large** : something high-sounding but imperfectly apprehended. [e. g. Poets dream that war will be a thing of the past, when world—federation is established :

“The war-drums throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World.

Then the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal Law.”

—Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*.

Evolution, as applied to human society by modern thinkers, is a very favourite idea of this kind ; it is laid hold of—often by people who understand it very vaguely—as an agency which will bring about a millenium, a blessed state of society in which selfishness, envy, cruelty, misery &c. will all disappear. In a conversation in his *Animals and their Masters* Helps gives a good instance of this tendency to rely on the course of events. This is in connection with the subject of the cruel overcrowding of sheep and cattle on board ships carrying live stock to England. Milverton points out that the merchant or importer of live stock is unable to remedy this, though he is subjected to loss in consequence of the death of many of the animals during the voyage. “He is not a ship-owner, and has probably but little influence with ship-owners. It would require great skill, energy, and devotion to a purpose foreign to his pursuits, to organise a combination of ship-dealers, who might insist on provision being made in cattle-carrying ships for the proper treatment of animals.” Sir Arthur Godolphin, another of the Friends, replies that “*in the course of time a remedy would be found*. Gradually combination would arise among the shipowners. Competition would come in. New vessels would be built, in which, from the first when it would be far less expensive, arrangements would be made for the humane carrying on of the traffic.” To this optimistic view, Milverton replies : “Well it may be so ; *but observe all that you say is hypothetical, and is to happen, if ever it does happen ‘in the course of time’* ; whereas, the German government can prescribe, as our government has prescribed, certain regulations which would at once go some way to attain the desired object.”] **Remain spectators** : Compare what the author quotes from Bacon in para 6. of the Essay on Practical Wisdom. **Act at once &c.**—may be exercised without any previous attention to or study of the subject ; this is absurd, for a man’s benevolence is not capable of working wonders—it can only be employed with good effect if a man has learnt what precisely should be done, and how ; and this requires preliminary training.

**Para 5. But opportunities** : There are indeed a great many occasions, easy enough to perceive, on which one may do good ; but these rarely happen to be just such as we can at once make use of : it is necessary that we should be quick in making ourselves ready to take advantage of the opportunities when they come. **Requires method** : One should set to work systematically—according to some plan—as well as spare no pains, to do any real good. **It is by no means** : Benevolence is a thing very different from the easy-going complacency with which a man who is satisfied with his own lot in life looks upon the concerns of the busy world. Or—It is not a mere do-thing sort of kindly feeling towards our fellow-men that constitutes true benevolence. **Well-fed—living**



at ease (and so lazily disposed to take a cheerful view of things.) **Reclining** : resting at ease.

**Para 6. As to the notion** : We should reject altogether the idea that it is necessary to wait till we have power to do good. **One that &c.**—quite wrong. **Surely the exercise** : It is manifestly absurd that one should not try to do good unless he possess high position, wealth &c. **Laying some foundation** : doing what will enable him hereafter to do real good ; preparing for a career of active benevolence (by studying some subject, ascertaining what has been done, and in what direction fresh effects should be made &c.) **And whoever.....it comes**—And if a man waits till his power of executing his plans of doing good is considerable, he will certainly fail to turn such power to the best account when he does acquire it ; because he will then be unprepared, and, as stated below, he will have no time then for preparation). **It is not..... principles**—When a man is busily engaged (as when he rises to be a minister of state), and when his station in life makes him an object of deep respect, it is very inconvenient for him to set about collecting information, or get at general truths as to what should be done. **He should then** : When occupying a high position and busy with his important duties, he should carry out what he has already thought out ; it is too late for him then to search for facts and draw inferences from them ; that would involve too much labour, and would, after all, have to be done with undue haste, with the eyes of the public on him (so that every little mistake is noticed seriously and made the means of injuring him. **Painfully**—laboriously and with diffidence (because he has then a great deal to do, and is weighed down by a sense of responsibility). **Precipitately, before &c.**—without leisure and privacy.

**Para 7. Worldly-wise**—men of narrow, selfish prudence. **Following.....occupations**—pursuing or carrying on, with as much energy as is necessary, a man's worldly business—the only work which such men regard as proper or right. **As they call it** : These words imply as is shown in the next para—that it is wrong to look upon mere money-getting or professional business as legitimate, though worldly men are inclined to think so. **Surely providence** : It would be absurd to suppose that God intends we should devote all our energies to the acquisition of money, leaving us no opportunity for the exercise of benevolence. [This is a rebuke addressed to the purely worldly-minded, who are censured in Essay II. para 13 for another reason]. **All-absorbing**—engrossing all our time and energy. **Benevolence to work in**—the play or operation of our kindly feelings. **However if a man** : But if only we abstain from wasting time and thought in trying to show ourselves off to others, or fancying that we are objects of criticism on the part of others, there will not be wanting time and energy for carrying out elaborate schemes of doing good. **Vain glory** :

compare "dreams of vanity," para 1 ; as well as para 2 of Essay II. and para 7 of Essay IV., where the author ridicules this abuse of our powers of thought or imagination.

**Para 8.** [ On the subject of this paragraph, or one closely connected with it, compare what Helps says in *Friends in Council*, Vol I : " There is a theory which has done singular mischief to the cause of recreation and of general cultivation. It is that men cannot excel in more things than one ; and that if they can, they had better be quiet about it. ' Avoid music, do not cultivate art, be not known to excel in any craft but your own,' says many a worldly parent, thereby laying the foundation of a narrow, greedy character, and destroying means of happiness and of improvement which success, or even real excellence, in one profession only cannot give. *This is indeed a sacrifice of the end of living for the means.*" And in Ellesmere's cynical essay on the *Arts of Self-Advancement* (Vol. 3, *Friends in Council*), occurs this half-satirical advice : " Be known if you can, for pre-eminence in one thing, even if it be the making of a button. It jars against the self-complacency of men, and astonishes them now, you do not want to astonish them) to find that a man can do two things very well. ... And we all know many men who have remained obscure, chiefly because they could do too many things too well." ] **I do not mean.....reputation for it**—I do not deny that energetic pursuit of the good of our fellowmen may indeed be an obstacle to success in life ; the reason is that for such success, it is necessary that a man should be noted for doing some particular kind of work very well—the work being one generally recognised as directly useful ; and if it is well known that a man attends to other matters (*e. g.* works of benevolence) people are slow to believe that he can really achieve excellence in his worldly business ; hence though a versatile man may possess such excellence, he fails to secure a reputation for it, and this goes against worldly success. **Contend—maintain.** **Depends upon :** See above quotation from Ellesmere's Essay. **Obvious intention :** Men plainly see that he is engaged in other matters (in doing good to others as is here meant) and they think that such a man cannot have much energy left for acquiring excellence (which, they fancy, requires single-minded pursuit of one thing) ; and so he is not believed to possess this excellence, even though he has really attained it, as is by no means impossible for an able man to do. (A lawyer, for instance, who writes for the papers, or joins actively any public movement for a social or political object, is not credited with being a really sound professional man ; for his fellow-practitioners, who are immersed in their briefs, speak slightly of him. This may be partly accounted for by envy and narrow-mindedness on the part of the latter.) **But any deprivation :** This consideration however, should not deter us from **works of benevolence** ; if men looked upon the duties towards their



fellow-men in the light of Christian teaching, they would be content to bear this loss--*viz.* any injury to their reputation. That is, if men (who profess to be Christians) would but implicitly obey Christ's injunction "Love thy neighbour as thyself," they would not shrink from the small amount of self-sacrifice required in pursuing works of benevolence to the injury of a reputation for professional excellence. (This is further explained below.) **We should then see** : Such a recognition of their duties as Christians would teach them that they are not to do good to others only now and then according to their caprice or convenience, and unhesitatingly lay aside works of benevolence, whenever these are found to interfere in the least with their selfish ends. That is, men would then perceive that the exercise of benevolence is a solemn duty, not to be set aside as soon as it become inconvenient and injurious from a worldly point of view. **By chance**—at random ; according to our whims or caprice. **Savours**—smacks ; has a tinge. **Benevolence is.....humanity**—Our principal duty in life—the duty that should occupy the greatest share of our time and energy—is to do good to our fellow-creatures ; charity should indeed begin at home, but it should not be confined to the domestic sphere ; it should spread to the furthest corners of human society—reaching to all men. [The author does not seem to mean that all men should be regular philanthropists, and set about doing good to men of all races and climates ; but he maintains that our sympathies should not be strictly confined to particular creeds and colours,—we should be ready to feel for all men, and whenever an opportunity presents itself, or some evil affecting any portion of the human race is brought home to our thoughts, we should not abstain from exertion on the ground that such matters do not concern us.] **Home duties**—duties to our parents, wife, children, &c. The reference is to the saying *charity begins at home*—that is, we should not neglect our duties to those nearest to us in seeking to benefit others, that such duties have a precedence over all others. The saying has also been interpreted to mean that the home is the first school of unselfishness or altruism—that it is through the domestic affections that we learn to work for others, to postpone our own ease and enjoyment for their sake—a lesson which we may afterwards come to apply in a wider sphere of benevolence, by mounting up to a higher and broader conception of our duties to fellow-mortals and even the brute creation. **Extending itself** : gradually embracing men of every creed, colour, and nationality. **Utmost verge**—the most distant limits or border ; the farthest bounds. **A vague.....rest in**—A mere weak or passive feeling of kindness to men falls miserably short of the proper standard of public duty. Or—we should not be content with a mere dim confused wish that men might be happier and better. Compare what the author says in para 5 of "indolent good humour" &c. **Rest in**—remain contented with.

**It is not enough** : we should not be content, if only we can say that nothing which concerns the good of men is a matter of indifference to us, and that we passively assent to, or help for the time being, whatever plan is brought to our notice as fitted to do good to men. That is, mere vague sympathy, however wide in its scope, and mere readiness to subscribe to any charitable funds etc., cannot be regarded as a fulfilment of our duties to our kind. **Alien to us**—foreign to our sympathies. The reference is to a passage in Terence's comedy, *Heautontimorumenos* (the self-tormentor) : *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*—"I am a man, I think nothing in human affairs to be alien or foreign to me." **Transient assistance** : The author refers to those who spend money for charitable purposes—for relieving the famine-stricken, to establish hospitals &c.—and who fancy they thereby perform their duties as Christians. **No : in promoting &c.** That is not enough; we should earnestly labour to improve the condition of our fellow-beings ; we should set ourselves diligently to devise proper means, should always be anxious for the success of such schemes, and try strenuously to carry them out in practice. (If do not we must not flatter ourselves with the idea that we are benevolent, that we are doing our duties as Christians.) **What is more...wishes**—Above all, we should not allow ourselves to be discouraged by any opposition, obstacle, or delay ; and should unhesitatingly, and as often as necessary, consent to act in ways contrary to what we personally like or desire. [For instance it may be necessary to work together with men personally disagreeable to us or to adopt means quite irksome to us—such as going about soliciting the sympathy and help of a number of people, submitting to rude behaviour on the part of many ; but we should not shrink from all this.] **Nothing short** : All this is required of us in performing what we are enjoined as Christians to do towards our neighbours—namely, going about nursing those who are ill, relieving the famine stricken and supplying clothes to the destitute. Or—The Christians religion enjoins us to visit the sick &c. ; these duties to our fellow-men cannot be properly performed without toil, patience, and a readiness to forego one own tastes whenever necessary. **Short of**—less than. **Visiting &c.** In the Gospel of Matthew, Ch. XXV. where the day of Judgment is described, occurs this passage : "And he shall set the sheep (*i. e.* the worthy one) on his right, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king (*i. e.* Christ) say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in : Naked, and ye clothed me, I was sick, and ye visited me, I was in prison, and ye came unto me.....In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*"

**Para 9.** The subject of this paragraph is evidently one which often engaged our author's thoughts—as is shown by the fact that he wrote a book about it, *Animals and their Masters*, in which he discussed what practical steps might be taken to minimise cruelty to animals. **No unworthy**—by no means a trivial ; a proper field for the operation of &c. **We hold that** : The prevailing belief is that as brutes have no souls, they die once and for ever when they cease to breathe, they are not destined to enjoy conscious existence after death. (Christians believe that the brutes have no second existence after death, such as men, who possess immortal souls, are privileged to enjoy.) **The inevitable** : The fact that they are destined to live for such a brief period only, ought to make us feel all the greater pity for them. **Plead for them**—appeal to our pity. **Touchingly**—in an affecting manner ; so as to rouse tender pity. **The insects on the surface** : The construction is rather loose, or rather colloquial ; we may supply “As to,” or words to that effect, at the beginning of the sentence **Ephemeral** (Greek *Epi* and *hemera* a day ; *lit.* lasting but a day—short-lived. The name *Ephmera* is given to a small fly supposed to live for a single day. **Who would needlessly** : surely no one can be so unfeeling as wantonly to cut short the brief period of their existence during which they indulge in lively movements. **Needlessly**—when they do not injure us. Compare what Milverton says in *Animals and their Masters* : “ You see a number of flying creatures, whirling about in a mazy dance, and as far as we can judge, enjoying themselves very much, and doing us no harm. They are not even touching any of that ‘property’ which lawyers love so well. If you were to kill any of them at this moment, it would not merely be a cruelty, but an invasion of right—an illegal transaction.”] **Whole animate creation**—all living creatures. **To those animals** : while we should abstain from cruelty to all living beings, we have something more to attend to in the case of those animals that belong to us, or come under our authority for a while ; we ought to treat them well (and not merely avoid injuring them.) **This seems.....God's creatures**—This truth is too manifest or palpable to require elaborate treatment, but there are men, who when they buy animals, fancy that they acquire at the same time a right to ill-use them to any extent. (They should remember that these animals were created by God, and that in buying them, they merely acquire the right of making them work—a right accompanied by the duty of taking care of them and treating them well ; for all rights imply corresponding duties.)

**Para 10.** **Consent to &c.**—acquiesce in ; allow others to practice cruelty towards animals. **The fear of ridicule** : because if we interfere, people may laugh at us (as middlesome, or foolishly soft-hearted.) **Some other fear** : e. g. the fear of our interference being resented. **As to.....suppose so**—A man shows his inability

to see what is right and what is wrong, if he fancies that any the least act of kindness can be unimportant or frivolous. **Moral blindness**—sheer ignorance of one's duty ; perversion or loss of moral vision—i. e. inability to judge about conduct. **The few moments** : A busy worldly man fancies that his hours of business are worthily employed, while the time spent in deeds of humanity is practically wasted ; but this fact is just the reverse ; the few moments he spared from engrossing worldly business to spend in little acts of kindness—amongst which humanity to animals should be reckoned—may be the best employed portion of his life, in the eyes of God. It may be that such little acts will do more for his happiness in the life to come, than all the other ways in which he spent his energy and time. **Lived to any purpose** : not spent quite in vain ; lived in a manner deserving of recognition or approval. **Worthy of recording**—fit to be set down or entered in the registers of Heaven (by the Recording Angel) ; placed to the account of his good deeds on earth.

## ESSAY VI.

### DOMESTIC RULE.

**Substance of the paragraphs :**

1. The difficulty of governing a family is all the greater because it is often underestimated.

2. Domestic rule is wrongly thought easy, through (i) imperfect recognition of the necessity or importance of understanding the members of a family, (ii) fancying that no rules or principles need be followed, (iii) that what is left ill-done now may be remedied afterwards.

3. The above errors exposed : (i) every day brings new duties, leaving no opportunity of mending former errors ; (ii) greater watchfulness is required in domestic rule owing to the absence of pressure from the world outside ; (iii) Domestic duties cannot be properly performed without understanding the feelings &c. of the family members.

4. It is a mistake (i) to underestimate the influence of domestic authority, (ii) to avoid familiar intercourse from a dread of losing authority and respect, (iii) to assume a harsh demeanour for the same reason, (iv) to fancy that enforcing obedience is the chief object of domestic rule.

5. The last of the above errors should be carefully avoided—because (i) coercion tends to rouse a spirit of resistance, (ii) it destroys all spontaneity, and hence all merit, in good conduct ; (iii) it cannot train the feelings or motives of those who are governed, but can only enforce external propriety.



6. Limits of domestic authority : You may enforce obedience to your wishes, but it would be too much to expect that those under you should think all such wishes to be just or reasonable.

7. Unless founded upon truth and love, domestic authority is a despotism.

8. Without love and sympathy it is impossible (i) to enter into the feelings, and understand the character, of the members of a family ; (ii) to make children confiding and straightforward—for fear teaches them to tell lies.

9. Importance of Justice and truth : Connivance (often called “overlooking trifles”) is mischievous, as i) it is a departure from truth, arising from (a) indecision and confusion as to what is right or permissible, or (2) laziness ; (ii) it creates uncertainty in the minds of dependents, and (iii) gives them an example of slyness. A thing should be either clearly prohibited, or freely permitted.

10. Whatever is permissible should be openly recognised and encouraged, so as to exhibit sympathy and secure confidence. It is not enough merely to assert that one desires the welfare of those governed, as it is not likely to be believed.

11-12. Means to be made use of in domestic rule : (i) One’s own example in enforcing duties.

13. (ii) Praise and blame, the award of which should never depend upon caprice or temper.

14. (iii) Ridicule should be generally avoided, as too strong, likely to destroy moral courage, and difficult to apply carefully.

15. Ridicule is especially dangerous when directed against early attempts at self-improvement ; young people are more afraid and ashamed of appearing inconsistent, than those who have learnt that changes in conduct and opinions necessarily attend all progress or mental development.

16-21. General maxims : (1) Make as few actions punishable as possible. (2) Do not lay down the results of personal experience as truths intelligible to all. (3) Do not fancy that others must like what you like. (4) See that what you command can really be performed. (5) Do not punish out of anger, nor forgive through laziness. (6) Do not censure as disobedience what is due to the vagueness of your own instructions. (7) Be not suspicious.

**Para 1. Tacitus :** a great Roman historian of the second century A.D.—whose best known works are the *Annals*, a *History of Rome*, and a *Life of Agricola* (in which occurs the saying here quoted.) **Agricola** (A.D. 37-93) A Roman general in the days of Nero and Vespasian, best known as the Governor or Proconsul of Britain (from 78 to 84 A.D.) who greatly extended the limits of Roman dominion in that country. He married his daughter to the historian Tacitus. **And the worst :** What makes the difficulty of governing a family all the more serious is that we often fail to realise the difficulty, until it comes to weigh heavily on us (i.e. until some un-

pleasant circumstance arises, such as the open rebellion of a son, which brings home to us the extreme difficulty of managing a household satisfactorily.)

**Para 2.** The reasons why men fail to perceive the difficulty of domestic rule, are given in this para ; the reasons resolve themselves into inability to understand the gravity of a domestic ruler's duties **Must needs**—cannot fail to ; is sure as a matter of course to. **Whom he sees daily**—the members of a household (because he sees &c.) **And also perhaps** : The ruler of a household probably thinks that so long as he is bent upon doing his duty towards those under his care, it is of no consequence whether he understands them (But it is shown in the next para that it is not possible to perform this duty, without entering into the feelings of those who are governed.) **No great matter**—a matter of indifference. **By them** : *by* has the force 'with respect to' or 'towards.' **There is much licence**—nothing like strict rules about right and wrong ; a great deal of arbitrary authority, or free exercise of discretion, is allowable. *Licence* means something more than liberty—absence of hard and fast rules about conduct. The word is explained by what follows—"each occasion is to be dealt with" &c.—which means that a new rule may be laid down to meet each particular case, and such a rule may even be made after the case has occurred. (Of course the author does not approve of this sort of arbitrary law-making on the part of the head of a family.) **Dealt with**—tried (and punished if need be.) **Or after** : so that the law has what is called a retrospective force—*i.e.* application to past actions. This is of course generally unjust. **Or he imagines** : Another reason why people underrate the difficulty of domestic government, is that they fancy any affair touching the household may be left undone or unsatisfactorily managed at the time, to be set right afterwards when convenient—that is when their other affairs happen to be lighter or less engrossing. (The folly of leaving things ill-done with this hope, is shown in the next para.) **May leave &c.**—neglects to deal with at all, or deals with in an unsatisfactory fashion. **At his leisure**—when he has more time. **Outer world**—world beyond the bounds of home. The *concerns* meant are those connected with a man's profession, as well as his public duties, if he has any.

**Para 3.** **But each day** : But new duties have to be discharged every day, different from those of previous days (so that the latter cannot be taken up again.) Compare what Mathew Arnold says :—

Each day brings its petty dust  
Our soon choked souls to fill ;  
And we forget because we must,  
And not because we will.

**And they are as waves** : And the duties of each day can no more be recalled than the waves that dash themselves against the



shore.—each wave being succeeded by others like it, but never identical with it. (Thus the duties of each day are so different, that there is seldom any opportunity of mending what has been ill-done at the proper time. **And amongst all** : There are no duties in which a man acts so much on his own responsibility, and meets with so little wholesome check in the shape of public opinion when he happens to go wrong, as in his dealings with the members of his own family ; it is, therefore, all the more necessary for him to exercise domestic authority in a considerate and careful manner. **More by himself** : There is no tyrant like the domestic tyrant—the petty despot in his home. In England, there is a strong disinclination on the part of the public and even the law-courts to interfere with the exercise of power in a father or husband ; and it is only in very serious cases that there is an outcry. **Outcry**—strong censure, or disapprobation. **Watchfulness**—careful observation (of the feelings of those under his rule (as well as taking care not to act from caprice or temper on his own part.) **Whence arise out &c.**—the duties which spring from the fact of his being a father, husband, guardian or master, which he has to perform by virtue of his position as the head of a family. **Nor can there be** : And we have no ground for supposing that he will discharge those duties properly, if he does not sympathise with the members of his family ; it is not enough he should know them very well by their looks, if he cannot enter into their feelings.

**Para 4. The extent.....great**—The authority of the master of a household goes a great way, and can do no end of harm or good. **Overlooked**—lost sight of. **Underrate the influence** : form a low estimate of how much their authority can accomplish. **Unless they see** : if they do not observe the evidence of the influence of their authority in external actions (or words, gestures etc.) **The effect.....education**—In dealing with persons of a lower station and imperfect education (*i.e.* with servants), this mistake about the extent of domestic authority is made more mischievous by a second mistake (*viz.* that familiar intercourse would encourage such persons to take too much liberty.) **In which case &c.** In dealing with such inferiors, they are liable to fall into the error of thinking that it is only gentlemen (men of good birth and breeding) who know how to behave properly, how to abstain from taking liberties in familiar intercourse. That is, masters think it is not safe to treat servants familiarly, lest the latter, not knowing how to behave, should go beyond the proper bounds of such familiarity, and should take undue advantage of it. **Natural sense of propriety** : In using the word *natural*, the author implies that this sense of propriety does not depend wholly upon birth or culture, and there is no reason to suppose the lower classes are wanting in it. [Prof. Huxley says : “ Thoughtfulness for others, generosity, modesty and self-respect, are the qualities which make a real

gentleman or lady, as distinguished from the veneered article which commonly goes by that name.....On the face of the matter, one does not see why the practice of these virtues should be more difficult in one state of life than another ; and any one who has had a wide experience among all sorts and conditions of men, will, I think, agree with me that they are as common in the lower ranks of life, as in the higher."—*Critiques and Addresses*, p. 8.] **Put the right limit**--teach or assign the proper bounds ; prevent familiarity from encouraging too free or disrespectful behaviour. **Well-born**--of a good family ; gentlemen by birth. **And from either.....disposition**--any one of these mistakes, or the combined action of both, often leads men to assume a rough manner with their inferiors, to increase their authority, and to avoid familiarity as tending to weaken it ; it is, however, absolutely necessary to permit some amount of familiarity to their subordinates, in order to understand the feelings and character of the latter. Or more briefly--Owing to these mistakes, people naturally polite often behave harshly and abstain from familiarity, thereby failing to understand those who are nearest to them. [This is the reason why so many men who are naturally kind and affable, habitually behave towards their inferiors in a curt and repellent manner. This has often prevented sympathy and mutual understanding between the rulers and the ruled.] **These causes ? viz.**, underestimating the influence of domestic authority, and fancying that familiarity is sure to be abused by one's inferiors. **Led--induced.** **Add to**--make more imposing. **Their own**--natural to them. **As they fancy**--as they wrongly suppose their authority would be impaired or weakened. **Freedom**--easy or familiar intercourse. **Allow**--grant. **Enter into**--appreciate. **Perhaps.....restrain** : one reason why some people abstain from this necessary amount of familiarity, is that they think they can contrive to discharge their duties as masters without such familiarity ; but they think so, simply because they want only to keep those under them in check ; they have no higher notion of governing a family ; and it is true that merely to keep others under restraint, it is hardly necessary to understand their dispositions. **Coercion.....government**--It is a great mistake however, to fancy that to govern it is enough to enforce obedience ; really to govern people, you must do a great deal more than merely compel them to act as you wish them to do. **Coercion**--compulsion ; restraining by force.

**Para 5. We should.....labour**--It is necessary to be scrupulously careful not to rouse a desire to throw off our authority ; and we should not therefore seek to force those committed to our rule to perform their duties, as if they were so many prisoners working at the galleys in chains. **We should be very careful** : In seeking eagerly to have our directions strictly followed in external ac-

tions, this is considerable danger of destroying the voluntary character of such actions altogether ; and unless an action is voluntary, it has no moral worth—it is hardly the action of the doer ; we should take particular care to avoid this danger. Or—We should not be blindly eager to get our subordinates to perform an action, in its external aspect, exactly as we like to see it done ; because then the action may be purely mechanical, the person doing it having no heart in the business and going through it, not of his own accord, but merely for fear of our displeasure. **Germ**—the slightest trace, or element. **Spontaneousness** : an act is spontaneous, if it comes of a person's free choice or zeal, and not from fear of others. **And is it likely** : It is therefore absurd to suppose that it is for masters to force those under them to be virtuous, by insisting on obedience to commands. That is, we should not presume to complete God's work, by compelling those whom God has endowed with free will, to become virtuous in obedience to our commands. **By word &c.**—that it is for us to say to our subordinates “Be virtuous,” in order that they may straightway become virtuous. **We may insist** : All that we can do is to compel those under our rule to go through a certain fixed set of duties mechanically, as soldiers are made to go through certain movements &c. by the drill-sergeant ; but it is impossible to train up the feelings in that fashion (so that the right motives of conduct may be strongest with them.) Or—We may enforce the strict observance of a set of stiff and formal rules of conduct, as an officer insists upon the military discipline of the soldiers under his command ; but we cannot command the affections of men, in the same way as we command their actions. (See the fine passage quoted to illustrate para 6. of Essay II.) **Soldier-like precision**—the exactitude enforced in military life. **There is no drilling** : There is no successful mode of teaching people the right feelings and desires by mere word of command repeated day after day. **Hearts** : as contrasted with the outward parts of their bodies—which may be said to be drilled in enforcing a “routine of proprieties.”

**Para 6. It is a great thing** : It is very important not to go beyond the proper bounds &c. ; that is, not to seek to exercise this authority in matters beyond the control of the master of a household. We are told below that this authority extends over the actions, but not the thoughts, of one's subordinates &c. **To place it** : to set up this authority on its proper basis,—*viz.*, the love and respect of those under your rule. (See next para.) **You cannot make** : You cannot compel your subordinates to think as you do, or to approve of all that you direct them to perform. It is too much to expect them to regard all your actions and directions to be just and proper. **Conform to it**—sanction whatever you do in your capacity as master of a household. **It may be fair** : The master of a household may be right in expecting his subordinates

to act as he directs, but it would be unreasonable for him to expect that they should regard such directions as the wisest imaginable; to expect this, is to adopt the most certain means of making them insincere—of teaching them to profess what they do not believe.

**Your submitting persons**—To ask them what they think of the question is indeed a matter of favour—an uncalled-for act of grace; but if you show this favour, you should bear this in mind that a thing cannot appear just or reasonable to one's mind, simply because his superior thinks so. **Gratuitous**—what you were under no obligation to do. **Courts of Reason**—The Reason of men sitting in judgment on the propriety on certain actions.

The reference to the maxim that "Law is no respecter of persons"—that is all men are equal in the eye of Law, no one being entitled to greater consideration in a court of law on account of his rank, position or wealth. Reason is spoken of as a judge holding a court to which all actions are referred for judgment. Reason will never call an action right because it is done or commanded by a person in a superior position; it will call that right which is truly such, and that wrong which is really wrong, irrespective of rank, position or wealth. **Your wishes**: They may justly be expected to do something because it is your wish, in spite of their arguments to the contrary; but this has nothing to do with the question whether it is, in itself, the right thing to do under the circumstances. Or more briefly—It may be right to overrule their objections, and make them to *do* what you wish, but surely they are free to *think* your wishes to be reasonable or the reverse—which is a different matter altogether. **Outweigh**—have greater weight or authority than; overrule, or override. **Their arguments**—any reasons they have for acting differently. **Independently**—irrespective of your wishes (or position as superior.)

[This paragraph is a protest against the conduct of those domestic tyrants, who are not content, as strong-minded men are, with enforcing obedience, but attempt to make those under them profess to think their wishes perfectly wise and reasonable. This they do in order to flatter themselves that they are kind masters; but it makes their caprice and tyranny more intolerable, and teaches their subordinates to be abject hypocrites; Quilp in Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop* is a caricature of this type of character; and Osborne Senior in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (see Ch. xlii) may be taken as an example.]

**Para 7. Founded upon**: There must be no insincerity, no harsh unsympathetic exercise of authority, if a family is to be governed wisely and successfully. **Nothing better than**—pure and simple; unmitigated.

**Para 8. It requires**: Love of the most comprehensive or liberal kind has to be constantly brought into play to make domestic rule a success. **Extended form**: not a narrow indulgent treatment



of this or that member of the family, nor a love that looks upon its object as a sort of property. **Convince them** : make them feel that you enter into their feelings. **Upon that sympathy** : If they fear or suspect that you do not understand their feelings, they will practise dissimulation with you—disguise their real feelings in your presence. **Form an open** : make the child grow up to be a candid, perfectly honest man or woman. **Terrify it**—create the habit of speaking the truth by means of fear—by merely punishing severely any departure from truth. **On the contrary** : so far from fear being of use in inculcating truthfulness, it is from fear that a child first begins to tell lies, not from a desire to obtain by falsehood anything it wants. **In domestic authority**—who rule over families. **And the more so** : It is all the more difficult for an inferior to confide in a superior, because many of the things which we communicate as secrets, are acts of foolishness on our part, or those acts which we think foolish (and from a superior we expect rebuke for such acts, rather than sympathy.) *Confidence* here means the act of confiding, or imparting as a secret.

**Para 9. Built**—based. **And therefore upon truth** : no rule can be just which is based on falsehood—which does not recognise the importance of practising and encouraging truthfulness. (What the author means by “built upon truth” is clear from what follows ; he means that unless there is due regard for truth & unless all insincerity or slyness be avoided, one cannot govern a family wisely or successfully.) **But it may not.....conventional-ity**—It may have escaped the notice of many people, that the result will be very mischievous, if the head of a family departs even slightly from truth, and contents himself with merely keeping up appearances, even in a trifling matter. **What evils** : The evils are described below—“Connivance creates uncertainty” &c. **Deviation**—swerving ; falling away (from truth) ; straying. **Conventionality**—observance of forms ; what is sanctioned in society by usage. **There is a common** : It is usual to hear people talk of what they call “overlooking trifles”—i.e. taking no notice of slight offences. (This expression shows that it is not thought at all wrong to overlook trifles ; but the author goes on to point out how wrong it is.) **But what.....recognise it** : What people generally mean however, when they use this phrase, is—that they pretend not to notice something which has been going on in their family, because it is harmless ; but if it is really harmless, it is surely the proper course freely to notice and allow it. [This is daily illustrated in families of which the younger members are less strictly orthodox than the paterfamilias.] **Thus they contrive** : In this way, they manage to make those practices, appear wrong which are really harmless. [This is creating fictitious crimes (see para 17)—a highly objectionable practice, as it tends to

weaken domestic authority, besides being mischievous in other ways.] **Or the expression means:** The phrase "overlooking trifles" may have a second meaning—that the things overlooked are not harmless, but are such as do not cause them much trouble at the time; and that they therefore try to believe such things cannot be very injurious. The author implies that by tending to form a bad habit, even a comparatively slight indulgence may turn out mischievous; but many masters of families are too lazy to take this into account. **In either case:** whether the matter overlooked is really harmless or not, rulers of households should not shrink from dealing with it in a straightforward, unhesitating manner; *i.e.* they should either openly approve of it, or strongly prohibit it. **The greater quantity:** The more open and unmistakable your attitude is, the better—*i.e.* you should avoid slyness or mystery as much as possible. **Connivance creates:** If you wink at or overlook offences, you keep those under you in the dark as to your views—whether you are annoyed, or really wish them to go on doing such things; and besides you teach them to be crafty or insincere, by this want of openness on your own part. **And very often:** If you take the trouble to examine your thoughts, you will generally find that you have not decided whether the acts in question are permissible; and that you are too lazy to take any pains to come to a decision. **All this:** To connive at anything out of secret hesitation or laziness, is not open, honest dealing.

**Para 10. Whatever:** you should openly and cheerfully permit your children or inferiors to enjoy such pleasure or freedom, as you have no objection to—as you think harmless. **You should recognise:** you should unreservedly show your approval in such cases, and even sympathise and take part in such enjoyments. **Consult their welfare**—have their real good at heart. **They look upon it:** They (*i.e.* children &c.) regard such words of yours as conveying a mere theory never carried into practice—a vague notion you have in your head. That is, they are unable to believe that you care for their happiness, or know how to promote it. (See next sentence.) **They will doubt:** (As they have no proof of your sympathy) they cannot believe you understand their true welfare; for they have real grounds for thinking that you will probably altogether ignore their ideas of happiness. Or—They know that you want to make them happy according to your ideas of happiness, not theirs—which may be quite different. [The author hits upon a very common source of domestic unhappiness—one that often causes bitter disagreement between parents (especially loving but narrowminded parents) and grown-up children. For instance a young man whose father is well-to-do, wishes to be independent, and enter a particular sphere of work; his father, however, wants him to live in physical comfort, and do nothing,



or to engage in work which he feels uncongenial. No man can be happy but in his own way ; it is not everyone who is content with mere external comforts or splendour. How can such a young man trust in his father's schemes about his happiness? Again a fond mother often opposes her son's intention to take up work at a distance from home, fancying that her darling would be happier if detained at home and spared all the possible hardships of a life amongst strangers ; but the son, being of an ardent sanguine temperament, does not mind such hardships in the least, and feels it a living death to be tied to his mother's apron-strings, in spite of all the loving care she lavishes on him.]

**Para 11. Various means :** *i.e.* means of keeping a family free from discord &c , and of training up its members to be worthy men and women.

**Para 12. Chief means :** Cf, "Imitation is a globe of precepts" (Bacon)—*i.e.* one good example is of more use than any quantity of mere advice. **Illustrate &c.**—exhibit in practice and inculcate the duties which he wants all the members of his family to lay to heart. *To enforce* duties is to get them performed, or bring them home to the minds of others. [Unselfishness, self-control, charitableness in judging of others, are among the virtues which can be successfully inculcated only by personal example.]

**Para 13. They should.....humour**—One should not be guided by caprice, or his passing mood, in distributing praise and blame. That is, one should be uniformly just in awarding praise &c. **Humour**—whim. (The next sentence explains what the author means.) **He should not throw :** One should not praise an inferior out of pity, in order to cheer him up, after having behaved with unjust harshness or violence towards him. That is, you should equally avoid both unmerited rebuke (in a fit of passion and unmerited praise (to console, or to atone for such rebuke.) **Making up for**—compensating for ; consoling one after. **Display**—outburst. **Not warranted &c.**—unjustifiable under the circumstances ; not justified by (or too violent considering the amount of provocation received, or the offence committed.

**Para 14. In general**—as a rule ; except in special cases (as in curing one of vanity or conceit.) **Not that :** I do not mean to deny its efficacy to act as a restraint on foolish conduct. **But because :** I object to ridicule, because it has the effect of weakening a man's character, of making him dread the opinion of others too much. (For ridicule is very painful to those against whom it is directed ; and if they have often to suffer this pain, they habitually shrink from provoking ridicule by saying or doing what others might disapprove of.) **Poor**—not having strong righteous motives. **World-fearing**—wanting in moral courage. **Too strong**—dangerous. [As usual, the author explains below why he calls ridicule a heroic remedy—*viz.*, that it is likely to

destroy something good. There is something to be said against, or rather in modification of, this view, which the author puts into the mouth of one of the friends in his *Social Pressure*, at the close of an essay on Ridicule: "One would think", says Sir A. Godolphin, "to hear you, that great solvent of folly, ridicule, was never to be applied. And as regards the particular form of ridicule, described by that somewhat vulgar word *chaffing*, you have not given us any of its merits.....Now, for instance, when it is applied by an older and wiser man to younger persons, it is often meant to be very kind; and what is more, it is meant to be a substitute for the exercise of mere dictatorial authority. A father of a family notices some folly prevalent among the younger branches of a family. Being a kind-hearted man, he does not like to say, 'Don't do this', 'Don't do that', which imperious orders he knows may suppress the folly, but will not eradicate it. Consequently he makes a little fun of the affair; perhaps reiterates the fun—which may be necessary to produce the desired effect." Another member of the company observes "That would be a great deal better than irony, a mode of ridicule I detest; it (irony) always seems to me peculiarly ungenerous, and I have observed that it very rarely gains its purpose." Milverton, the writer of the Essay, asks in reply—"Would it not be better that there should be grave and serious talk, even if it amounts to reprehension, rather than this undignified mode of chaffing?" "No", rejoins Ellesmere, "it would not. It is assumed that the subject-matter is not a serious one, and therefore does not require this dignified seriousness intermingling with it." Then again, he says, in the case of equals, "grave advice and dignified seriousness would be thought somewhat of an impertinence; but ridicule, especially if it takes the shape of fun, may be much more safely administered."] **With such just precision**: so as to be just sufficient for curing the bad habit which is meant to be censured, and not go the length of weakening good motives (e.g. destroying a spirit of independence and manliness.)

**Para 15. Still less**: The head of a family should be even more careful not to seem to laugh at anything good (in character), or at the first attempts at moral improvement. (The reason is given below.) **There is perhaps**: It is perhaps even more necessary to foster new resolves at self-improvement by mild sympathetic behaviour, than to repress any vicious tendencies at the outset. Or—great care and tact are necessary to nip vices in the bud (for harsh injudicious treatment might make one defiant and more obstinate in an evil course; but greater care should be taken to avoid discouraging one's earliest efforts to correct an evil habit, or to lead a better life. **Dealing with**—(here) nursing. **Infant virtues**—good resolves when just springing up, or just in the stage of formation. **Amendment**—improve.

ment ; curing some evil habit &c. **An idle sneer.....resolve—** A thoughtless expression of contempt or even a look showing that one does not believe the resolution will be kept, has often been sufficient to destroy it at once—has caused the resolution to be abandoned. **On—**Young people are apt to feel so much ashamed or discouraged when their first efforts at self-improvement meet with contempt or disbelief (especially on the part of their elders), that they cannot persevere in such efforts, but at once return to their old ways. **Been the death of—**nipped in the bud. **We should also :** In the case of those who wish to mend their ways, we should carefully avoid reminding them of the hasty and mischievous remarks they used to indulge in--of the ungenerous or spiteful opinions they passed against others before they knew better ; if we do (remind &c.), there is great likelihood of confirming them in such evil practice. That is, if you go on telling people that they used to say such and such sharp things about others, they are likely to be ashamed of appearing to change their views, though they may have really wished to be more charitable in future. **Harden- ing them—**making them cling to &c.

**This is especially.....as a crime—**You should be particularly careful to avoid putting young people in mind of their immature and uncharitable opinions ; because young people feel more ashamed of appearing inconsistent than those who have seen more of the world ; they are readily led to regard any attempt at improvement as something very wrong. The reason is that the young have not realised how everything human is liable to change ; they have not seen enough of the world to find out that in looking back upon his past years, what surprises a man most is to find how greatly he has modified those opinions which he looked upon as absolute, unquestionable truths at one time ; they do not understand that a man constantly passes from one opinion to another (perhaps from one extreme to the opposite extreme), as he grows older and wiser,—just as a pendulum indicates the passing of time by its oscillations ; they have not the least idea of the fact that we can only come to hold certain opinions strongly, if we have already entertained quite different ones (and afterwards realised how weak or groundless these latter are.) Or briefly—Young men cannot bear to be thought inconsistent, for they do not know that change—especially change of opinion—is indispensable to progress. **Mutability—**change, or rather the tendency to change. **Former certainties—**what he felt quite sure about at first ; opinions which he formerly held to be certain or infallible. **Strangest—**most curious ; what he feels the greatest wonder (in thinking that he once believed in.) **Vista of the past—**retrospect of a series of past events—of all he did and thought in days gone by. [In our author's Essay on *Looking back upon Life*, certain changes of opinion which come over many

people as they advance in life, are mentioned: "Of the virtues, that one (Prudence) which some of us had most despised, or at any rate had supposed to be a mean, poor, and middle-aged virtue, has probably become the one, of which, from experience, we should now speak most highly". 2) Then again, we come to form a very different estimate of human character. Instead of brilliancy, or the power to do things with the least apparent effort, we come to admire conscientious labour. 3) We longer think eloquence the highest of human gifts; 4) Nor admire wit and sarcasm so much, though we can enjoy and appreciate them. 5) As life advances, the appreciation of sound argument is developed in most people. 6) We come to conclude that our fellow creatures are much better than might appear from history, —our first impressions, or the remarks of cynical writers whom we admire so much (and wish to imitate) when young. 7) We only find very gradually, how enormous is the amount of time that it takes to get any thing done—however important for human welfare it may be. 8) We perceive the mistake of fancying that men especially large bodies of men, would act quite reasonably, and ignoring those disturbing elements,—feeling prejudice, fancy &c,—which puzzle pedants; and we are all more or less pedants when young. 9) We find that we have at one time or other, belonged to one of two great classes of men from both of which our maturer judgment would keep us clear—viz., those who have an intense love of unreasoning conservatism, and those who have an intense love of destructiveness, or change for the mere sake of change. 10) We find, on retrospection, how important an element in human affairs is what we call chance—though we were inclined to ignore it when young.] **That pendulum, man:** Man is compared to a pendulum which always vibrates or oscillates, regulating the movement of the clock which shows how time passes; as a pendulum changes its position, so a man goes on changing his opinions, and these changes indicate the various stages of his progress. It is only when a man becomes incapable of profiting by experience and study, that his opinions cease to change at all; just as a pendulum ceases to move when the clock stops. **Way to some opinions:** in order to arrive at certain opinion, it is necessary first to have held opinions of a contrary kind. [Peel, Disraeli and Gladstone, among the statesman of the present century, may be taken as examples; and it is of opinions in such complicated subjects as Politics and Sociology that the author here speaks. The reason for the statement is, that in order to realise the truth of some opinions, it is necessary to see clearly that the opposite opinion is inadequate and untenable; and one can hardly see this, unless one has believed in this opposite opinion, and tried to defend it. It is in trying answer opponents, that one becomes fully aware of the weak

points in his own position.] **Inconsistency** : not being true to their former opinions. **Made to look** : We have been told above that a slight sneer, the barest expression of incredulity or contempt especially on the part of one's superiors, is often enough to discourage a young man's efforts at self-improvement.

**Para 16—21. General maxims**—precepts widely applicable, or often found useful. **The first is** : In the first place, the head of a family should be very sparing in issuing prohibitions—*i. e.* he should be tolerant, not inclined to prohibit or punish any acts unless it is really necessary to do so. *To make few crimes* is to **lay** down few penal clauses, to class or include few acts among offences—to avoid making many things punishable. All tyrants, domestic tyrants especially, are very fond of making their authority strongly felt ; they create a great many crimes, that they may have many opportunities of censuring and punishing those under them. **Not to lay down... ..comprehend**—Many persons seem to expect everybody at once to understand fully the truth and importance of all those rules which they have found useful in their own experience ; and they wish to make all such rules binding on their subordinates ; but this is harsh and unjust, and should be avoided. Or briefly—do not expect those under you to obey implicitly all those principles which long experience has taught you. **Lay down**—prescribe. **Of practice**—about conduct. **Ascertained &c.**—principles which no one can help perceiving to be true. *Innate* means *lit.* what is inborn, or born with us ; and the phrase is used of certain fundamental truths, the validity of which does not require to be established by reasoning and which are supposed to be acquired not from experience but on the testimony of each person's consciousness. The fundamental Laws of Thought, as laid down in works on Logic, as well as some of the axioms of Geometry, Arithmetic etc., are called innate truths by many philosophers, while thinkers of another school deny the existence of such truths, or regard the word *innate* as inappropriate. **While all persons** : This clause serves to define or explain “innate truths.” **Must at once** : of course it is absurd for one who has himself learnt those rules by carefully observing their effects, to expect others to appreciate them without any such experience. **Regulate.....tastes**—permit only such pleasures to others as are most agreeable to himself ; expect that what pleases him must please others too. That is, he should recognise the fact that tastes differ, and a man can be happy only in his own ways. See notes to para 10. **In commanding** : When you order a subordinate to do a thing, you should take the trouble of thinking whether he can really do it. It is implied that sometimes the command is too much for human nature to obey ; for instance, we constantly hear people enjoin or advise others not to think of a certain disagreeable subject, to dismiss some anxiety from



their minds, or to act in ways contrary to their character. A bashful man is enjoined to lay aside his shyness, a scrupulous or hesitating man is told to act with promptness and decision. **In punishing**: In awarding punishment, as well as in forgiving an offence, one should be guided not by his personal feelings or convenience, but by cool judgment. **Consult his anger**—be governed by a fit of anger; obey the dictates of passion. That is punishment should follow cool deliberate reflection, that it might be just, and have the effect of deterring the person punished from repeating the offence and of improving his character; if one acts on the prompting of anger, the punishment is likely to be disproportioned to the offence, is sure to be looked upon, as unjust, will set a bad example, and will have very little salutary effect. **Remitting**—refraining from; pardoning the offence. **His ease**: He should not consult his ease; *i. e.* he should not abstain from punishing, simply because it is very disagreeable or troublesome for him to inflict punishment. He should not do so because he wishes to spare himself the pain of inflicting pain, of seeing those under him sulky or discontented with his rule; but should extend his pardon only to those cases in which he really thinks it just or prudent to exercise mercy. **Let him consider**: When he finds any member of the family act contrary to his wishes, he should not hastily condemn such act as wilful disobedience, but should see if it is not due to his wishes having been imperfectly understood. That is, it may happen that he has not made his wishes clearly known, and in that case what looks like disobedience is the result of misapprehension. **Inclined.....disobedience**—disposed to censure as an act of defiance to his authority. **Resulted**: been occasioned by his failing to make them fully understand what he really wished them to do. **Trust largely**: He must not be suspicious. It is well known that to make our subordinates worthy of trust, we should show that we do trust them; that increases their self-respect, and improves their character, while the opposite effect is produced by a suspicious attitude.

### ADVICE.

#### Substance of the paragraphs:

1. Three kinds of advice are agreeable or endurable: (i) what agrees with what we have already decided to do; (ii) what we ourselves learn from studying the life of another, even if otherwise unpalatable; (iii) what is given simply to enable the adviser to bring in a long account of his own misfortunes, without appearing egotistical.

2. Direct advice, like direct taxes, is always felt to be troublesome.

*W. H. P.*



3. When a man's advice is sought, he usually puts in something for the sake of propriety, or to please a third party ; the person advised should know how to reject this part, and take only the useful portion of the advice.

4. Want of candour (*a*) on the part of one seeking advice is shown—(i) when he really wants assistance ; (ii) when he merely looks for approval of the course he has already decided upon and (*b*) on the part of an adviser, when, before he has heard you out, he begins to think what advice it would be to his own interest to give.

5. Advice to advisers : If the advice you give makes for your own interest as well as that of the person advised, do not attempt to conceal the fact, or make light of it ; if you do, he will be sure to reject the advice.

6. Seek advice—(i) from persons of a different disposition, circumstances, and modes of thought, to get extended views, (ii) from those of a similar nature, if you want the most practicable advice—though such advice may not be the soundest in itself—especially when a long course of action is to be initiated.

7. In giving advice on points of conduct,—(i) make the advice personal and practicable ; (ii) sympathise with the person advised ; (iii) give the best advice the matter admits of at its present stage ; (iv) avoid any unnecessary comments on his past conduct in the matter, or any unfavourable comparison with what you would have done under the circumstances.

8. If, however, your object is to improve your friend's character or principles, it may be necessary to exhibit fully, and trace to its source, the difference between his views and yours.

9. When you are resolved to do what will injure you in some person's estimation, it may make matters worse to consult him beforehand.

10. Choice of an adviser : (*a*) for your own sake, choose an upright rather than an ingenious friend, one possessing a delicate conscience, rather than one who will expect you to act less generously than he himself would, under the circumstances.

11. (*b*) For the sake of the person advising, avoid the selfishness of consulting those who would be injured if you follow the advice which is best for you.

**Analysis :** This Essay, which is on the whole the best in the book, may be roughly divided into two parts : I. concerning persons seeking advice, and II. concerning advisers.

I. (*a*) *General directions* : (i) reject the decorous part of advice (para 2) ; (ii) do not ask for advice when you mean assistance or mere approval (para 3). (iii) It is worse than useless to consult those whose advice you have already decided not to follow. (*b*) *Choice of advisers* : (i) Consult men of a different disposition or men of a similar nature, according as you want extended views,

or the most practicable advice (para 6); (ii) Prefer an upright and conscientious friend (para 10) (iii) do not consult those whose interests are opposed to yours (para 11).

II. (a) Advice is palatable when it sounds like praise, or is indirect (paras 1, 2). (b) Insincere or interested advice condemned (paras 3, 4). (c) Comments upon conduct should be avoided, except when the object is to change a man's principles (paras 7, 8).

**Para 1. Sure of a hearing**—is sure to be listened or attended to; is in no danger of being disregarded. **Coincides**—chimes in; accords. **Previous conclusions**—what we have already decided to do—the opinion we have already formed as to the right course. **Comes in the shape**: Such advice is acceptable because it amounts to praising our conduct, and strengthens our resolve. **Not unwelcome**—acceptable; by no means disagreeable or repulsive. **Derive.....ourselves**—draw, or arrive at, by our own study or reflections. **Moral**—lesson. **To our own**—i.e. to our own life—to teach us what we should do. **Bring it home**—impress it deeply on our minds; suggest the lesson as one of great value and clearly applicable to our own case. **Far from flattering**—by no means pleasing to our self-love; humiliating. The author means that the person whose life we study, may be weak or wanting in strong principles; and it is humiliating to think of ourselves as resembling such a man. **Palatable**—agreeable; to our taste. [The sentence means: Such advice as we get for ourselves as a lesson drawn from some one else's life, is not disagreeable; such a lesson may indeed be especially applicable to our case, because of certain similarities, which it is not pleasant to trace; and the advice itself may not be to our taste; yet we do not dislike it—though we should reject it if it comes from another.] **Endure**: put up with advice which is given by another, &c. **Interwoven**—brought in along; blended; mingled. That is, when another man tells us the story of his own misfortunes, and advises us not to fall into the error which injured him so much, the advice is not one which annoys us. **Not of ours**: because any reference to our own errors might wound our self-love; but if another man speaks of his own errors, we are inclined to pity him. **Throws in**—carelessly brings in; incidentally offers. **By way etc.**—in order to bring in, or enter into. **With more grace**—more becomingly; without appearing egotistical. It is of course a sin against good taste to talk long about one's own self, to tire another man with a tedious narrative of one's own actions, shortcomings &c. **Full recital**—detailed story; elaborate narrative. [The sentence means—when a man deplores some grievous mistake he committed, and at the same time warns us not to fall into similar error, we are inclined to take such advice in good part; it does not irritate us, or wound our self-love; for we feel that his sole object is to rouse our sympathy by a full narrative of all that he has

suffered, and that the advice he incidentally brings in is meant simply to make the narrative appear less unbecoming or tiresome.]

**Para 2. In general**—as a rule; it may be laid down as a maxim that &c. **It is with.....way**—What is true of taxation, is true of advice as well; as we are irritated or annoyed by taxes that we have to pay directly, so also we can hardly put up with what is given to us plainly as advice; it is sure to jar upon our ears—to make us feel uncomfortable. This is because we feel rebuked or humiliated by such advice; the attitude of an adviser being that of one superior either in wisdom or virtue—an assumption of superiority which we are not prepared to tolerate. **Taxes are either *direct* or *indirect***; a direct tax is levied at once from those who are to pay it; while an indirect tax is levied in the first instance from those who are expected to get it back from others,—the latter being hardly aware that they are paying a tax. The Income-tax is the most conspicuous example of a direct tax; while taxes on commodities are the most familiar variety of indirect tax,—these taxes being paid by the producer, importer, or merchant, who is expected to recompense himself by charging higher prices; so that it is the consumers of (*i. e.* the persons who use) the articles who really pay such a tax in the shape of enhanced price. It is well known that when a man has a tax demanded directly from him, when he receives visits (often at inconvenient times, and always annoying) from the tax-gatherer, he feels he is paying a tax, and is much more discontented than when he pays an equal (or even a larger amount indirectly. **They must not**: We do not like either taxes or advice to be forced on us; to have a tax demanded from us, or advice offered to us when we do not want it. **Understand**—appreciate; see the beauty of; at all like. **Knocking etc.**—demanding an entrance into our house. In the case of taxation, it is the visit of the tax-gatherer that is of course meant; and advice that is imposed on us, that we are made to listen to, or that comes unasked, is likened to such a visit. **Inconvenient times**: *i. e.* when we are short of cash, or do not know how to pay the tax. In the case of advice, it comes unseasonably when we are about to do some thing pleasant (but of questionable wisdom or propriety) or to neglect the performance of a disagreeable duty. **For ever talking**: The adviser is found constantly to remind us that we have neglected to follow his advice on previous occasions. Nothing is more common than to hear well-meaning people say, when we suffer the consequences of our own error, “I told you so, but you would not listen to me”—or words to that effect. **Arrears** (here) words of advice on former occasions (which were unheeded or neglected). It is always irritating to be told that if we had followed the speaker’s advice, we would have escaped certain errors or misfortunes. We feel that the speaker malici-

ously triumphs over our mishaps, and assumes an air of superior wisdom or virtue.

**Para 3- Wide difference :** This is pointed out below—the first kind of advice (spoken of in para 2) is generally careless, while the second is too cautious. **Thrust upon**—offered gratuitously, or without any asking. **General carelessness :** the fact that when advice is intruded upon you, it is, as a rule, given off-hand, thoughtlessly. **Caution of the other :** that when you deliberately ask some one what you should do, he is generally on his guard (*i.e.* he takes care to give you such advice as would sound well etc. See below). **Taken into account**—borne in mind ; considered. The sentence means—You should remember that such advice as comes unasked is generally careless (and therefore not of much value,) while such advice as you seek for is generally too guarded—not the free or full expression of the adviser's opinion. **Sifting**—analysing ; examining. **Separate**—distinguish ; leave out. **Decorous**—introduced for the sake of decorum or propriety ; serving to make the advice presentable. This is explained below. **I mean.....awe :** The “decorous part” of the advice which is asked for, means the words introduced by the adviser not for the benefit of the person advised, but for his own sake ; he wants to make the advice appear suitable to his character and position in the eyes of men ; he wants it to be approved by some other person or persons, whose opinion he dreads and respects. [In his essay on *Conformity*, Helps states this in a more general form : “With some unfortunate people, the much dreaded *world* shrinks into one person of more mental power than their own, perhaps merely of coarser nature ; and the fancy as to what this person will say about anything they do, sits upon them like a nightmate”—*F. in C.* vol. I.] **Puts in**—inserts. **His character &c. :** a man who enjoys a reputation for high character or virtue, or who occupies a high position for such people are generally consulted for advice. **You cannot expect :** It would be too much to look for disinterested advice when it may hurt the adviser. **The oracles.....ears**—The utterances of the oracles are sure to be in favour of Philip's projects, while the authority of Philip continues ; but the Athenians may even then benefit by the secret meaning of the advice, if they can find that out. **Reference :** Philip of Macedon (the father of Alexander the Great) was at the head of the Amphictyonic council of Delphi ; and so the oracles of Apollo at Delphi (the most famous oracle in Greece) dared not offend Philip by giving advice to any state which went against Philip's ambitious projects. The Athenians, who headed the opposition against Philip, were on this ground warned by their patriotic orator Demosthenes against relying on the oracle—as all Greeks used to do on important occasions. **Stripped of figure :** Your adviser is sure to make his advice palatable to those whom he fears or looks up to with respect ; but if you can penetrate into



the true meaning of the advice, you may find something in it which is meant for your good, and which you would do well to follow. **Oracles**—responses of priests (or priestesses) of a shrine (to inquiries made by States or private persons), (here) advisers consulted as authorities. The word often means one who gives himself airs of superior wisdom, and, in a good sense, one who is often consulted as an authority. **Philippize**—declare in favour of Philip ; be on Philip's side. **Inner meaning** : A reference to the fact that the oracles were often ambiguous—that “more was meant than met the ear.” Such responses were made necessary to prevent the predictions from being completely falsified by the event.

**Para 4, Disingenuous**—uncandid ; unfair ; a sign of duplicity. **Mean**—really want to obtain. The plan called disingenuous here is this : A goes to B, and asks his advice on a matter in which the right course is plain enough ; and on getting the advice he expected, A professes to be willing to act according to it, if B would help him, hoping to rouse B's sympathy by such flattering willingness. This is really a trick on A's part to obtain a promise of help. **Which you pretended**—i.e. only advice, and no assistance. Of course the person consulted will decline to assist you, if he sees through your scheme. **Affecting to care**—pretending that you really want. **Lay &c**—put the case. **For the chance**—because he is likely to confirm with his opinion—to show his approval of &c. That is, when you have already determined to do a thing, and only consult another with the hope of gaining his support, it is not honest to pretend that you care about his advice. **Rochefoucauld** A French writer (1613-80) author of *Reflections and Maxims*—a work full of shrewd observation and strong sense, but very cynical—based on a low view of human nature. **Laid bare**—exposed. **Falseness**—insincerity ; dishonesty. **Have hardly** : before hearing you out, set themselves to invent such advice as may bring about their own good, or increase their reputation for wisdom. **To their** : *To* has the force of *to serve* or *promote*. Bacon notes, among the “inconveniences of counsel,” the danger of being counselled “unfaithfully and more for the good of them that counsel than of him that is counselled.”

**Para 5. Maxim of prudence**—wise principle of conduct. **Put full in view**—exhibit or set forth fully and clearly. **With all** : giving to that motive the full importance (instead of trying to make light of it, pretending that you do not care for your own interest in the matter.) The sentence means—If your advice affects your own interest as well as that of the person advised, tell him plainly how much you are really interested ; that would be more prudent than affecting to care only for him, or trying to appear disinterested. The reason is given below. **Resolutely deaf** : he will obstinately refuse to listen ; persist in disregarding. **That part** : Those considerations which prove the course advised to be really for

his good. He will firmly believe that his best course is to act contrary to the advice (though it may be of advantage to him also to follow it). **Lame man**: A story to illustrate the advantage of combination. A lame man prevailed upon a blind man to carry him, promising to guide the latter along the right path. Here the adviser is compared to the lame man, who points out to another (compared to the blind man) the course which is advantageous to both. **It was pure charity**—that he was prompted solely by motives of benevolence in giving the blind man the benefit of his eyes. **Never .....home**: For the blind man, finding him deceitful, would have suspected him of having some further sinister motive.

**Para 6. To get extended views**—to widen your mental horizon, to correct narrowness of judgment. **In circumstances**: whose surrounding are different from yours (*e. g.* who are rich while you are poor, or vice versa); who occupy a different station in life. **Modes of thought**—ways of thinking; *e. g.* who are inclined to conservatism while you are an advocate of change, or who take a hopeful view of things, while you are inclined to be pessimistic. **Practicable**—easily carried out or acted upon; feasible. **Personal**—(i) applicable to you as an individual; suited to your character, position &c. or (ii) make the case their own, as it were, and advise accordingly; the first meaning seems preferable. **To a certain extent**—at least partially. For if we understand a man's nature, we can judge of his actions from his own point of view, even when such actions show great weakness; we see how such a man could hardly have acted differently. **It will not .....consistency**—The advice given by a man whose nature is similar to yours, may not be the most wholesome advice in itself—*i. e.* considered apart from the practical aspects of the case (or from what you can or cannot perform); but it is likely to benefit you most, what is theoretically the best; because you will probably be able to follow such advice with something like steadiness all through. **In the abstract**—as a matter of theory; apart from the circumstances of the case. **Up to**—in conformity with. **This applies** It is especially desirable to have practical advice from a man of a similar nature, when the subject is not of a passing nature, but involves a line of conduct. **Not temporary**: *i. e.* for some lasting object. **Course of action**—a series of steps (and not of a single step). **The Statesman**; A book written by Sir Henry Taylor (1836) containing instructions as to how political duties should be performed and political eminence striven after. **Observed** remarked. **Be for &c.**—do a man permanent good. **In the long run**—finally, ultimately. **Not founded**: which does not accord with; which it is not natural for a man of his character. In other words—unless a man acts systematically in accordance with his character, he cannot achieve true success in the end (though he may do something striking for the time.) [The words



here quoted occurs parenthetically in the following sentence : " In the earlier stages of a man's career he will find it his interest, if it be consonant to with his character (for nothing, be it observed, can be for a man's interest in the long run which is not founded upon his character) I say, if it fall in with his nature and disposition it will answer to his interests to have a speaking acquaintance with large numbers of people of all classes and parties."—*Autobiography of Sir H. Taylor*, vol. I. p. 204.]

**Para 7. Look about for :** try to find out. **Heart &c** can willingly or zealously take upon himself to perform. **Accomplish**—bring to a successful end. **Think for him**—judge what would be the best thing for him to do. **More need :** Because there is the greater danger, in that case, of your advising him to do what goes against the grain. **Degenerate into**—take the low character of; be unworthy of the name of advice, being nothing better than &c. **Would have. ....friend's :** between what your would have done under the circumstances and what he actually did. The sentence means—You should not hurt your friend by indulging in reflections on his past conduct in the matter, pointing out how much better you would have acted in his place ; that is not advice, but something much worse. **Take the matter up :** Make your advice directly applicable to the matter at the stage it has reached when you are consulted about it. That is, you should not needlessly criticise errors already committed by your friend in the business, but tell him what he should do now. **It is very well :** It may indeed be desirable to refer to earlier stages of the affair, and point out past errors, if that is likely to show him more clearly what he should now do ; or if such retrospect will serve any other useful end. In short—Do not indulge in criticism unless it is really necessary. **Comment**—mere criticism. **Judicious**—just. **Tend &c**—lead towards or conduce to, something can actually be done.

**Para 8. Relates :** concerns this or that action—some definite steps which have to be taken. **Principles**—rules of conduct. **Take him out**—draw his mind out of old groove of ideas and opinions ; give him new views of life. **As it were**—so to speak if we may use such an expression. **Intense difference**—Deep or vital contrast. **Trace up :** show clearly whence that difference arises ; "discover where it is that he is wrong in the heart" (E. III. 3.) The sentence means—The above remarks do not apply if you want to make a new man of him ; in that case you should take him out of his old groove and point out the essential dissimilarity between his ideas and yours, as well as the cause of that dissimilarity. **With what he has**—retaining the principles by which he has been guided till now ; without giving up his old views &c. **Induce.....altogether**—prevail upon him to give up, or completely renounce, some of his old ideas—some part of his old self.

**Para 9. Move him**—make him change his mind. **Acts according** : carries out that resolve. **Let him not** : It would be a great mistake for him to fancy that he can partially escape consequences (*i. e.* avoid offending such people), by asking &c.) **Break his fall**—make the fall less violent, not so fatal ; *i. e.* lessen the outcry, make the condemnation less severe. The metaphor is that of a person rushing down a precipice who catches at some plant or jutting piece of rock, and escapes being quite killed by the fall. **As it is**—the circumstances being as they are ; *i. e.* when he simply carries out the resolve which they bitterly disapprove of. **Be severe** : think very harshly of him ; bitterly condemn him. **Outrageous**—furious ; angry beyond the possibility of conciliation. The sentence means—Though indeed they will judge severely of him if he does not seek their advice at all (because the step he takes is very offensive to them), their anger will be much more violent if he does ask them for advice, and then act in spite of their advice to the contrary. In the first case he merely ignores their wishes, but in the latter case he defies them ; thus they have reason to be more deeply offended. **Not be so inclined** : disposed rather to conceal the fact etc. **Parade**—make a display of ; publish ; loudly complain. **As they would** : *i. e.* would parade the fact. The sentence means—If they are not consulted, they will probably abstain from saying so ; but in the other case, they will never tire of complaining that the wise advice they gave has been set at naught. **Is bound** : *e. g.*, when these *others* are his parents or guardian. **May be expected** : by “those whose opinion is of value” to the person who acts. **Not due**—not binding ; quite optional. The sentence means—Of course when it is your duty to seek the advice of certain persons, the case is different ; but there are many cases in which certain persons may expect you to consult them before taking a serious step, though you are not bound to do so ; in such cases it would be better for you not to consult them, when you are sure they will oppose what you have resolved to do.

**Para 10. Look for uprightness**—choose one who is perfectly honest. **Rather.....ingenuity**—preferring an upright character to one skilled in devising means. **Moral strength**—moral courage, power to face an unpleasant duty,—to risk the disagreeable consequences of doing what is right. **Discern.....enough**—see clearly what will come of doing your duty. People are often able to foresee the results of right actions, but lack the firmness or moral courage to face them in real life. **Mentor**—wise adviser. The name is given in Homer's *Odyssey* to the person (the goddess Minerva in the guise of an old friend) who accompanies Telemachus, the son of Ulysses. **Nice conscience**—delicate sense of right and wrong ; moral susceptibility. **Is less likely** : such a man is not disposed to commit the common mistake of advisers ; he

will not advise his friend to show a less tolerant or forgiving spirit, than he would himself exhibit in a similar case. **That error** : This error is due to a fear (on the part of the adviser) of being considered too quixotic, scrupulous or puritanical, or not sufficiently careful of his friend's interests. (This, like many other observations in this essay, is very subtle and admirable, showing great insight into character and motives.) **If I were you** : If I were in your place, I would do such and such things.' **Often on our lips**—what we frequently utter ; which we readily use (but we do so without reflecting whether we can actually put ourselves in another man's place.) **To disturb** : to change our personality, as it were for the time ; to throw ourselves in thought into the situation of another ; to feel and think, not in our own character, but in that of the friend we are advising. **Not to quit** : abandon the safe attitude of a mere looker-on. That is, we continue to feel that we are mere spectators,—to comfort ourselves with the thought that the difficult or delicate situation of the friend we advise, is his situation not ours. The sentence means—We often say 'we would do this or that in your case', when advising a friend ; but this is a mere pretence ; we rarely sympathise with another so intensely as to forget our own personality at the time ; we do not cease to feel that we are only looking on, that the difficulty or danger does not touch ourselves. **We recommend.....absence**—The steps we advise you to take are such as we might take if merely managing the matter for you (without being liable to all the consequences). **Never ought** : because the course is less generous or noble than we would adopt if the affair were really our own. It is well known that men (even honest conscientious men) are often less scrupulous and generous when acting in behalf of another, than when their personal interests are involved.

**Para II. For theirs** : i.e. not to place any one in an unpleasant position by asking his advice. You should not choose as an adviser one whom the affair touches personally. **Delicacy**—embarrassment. The persons meant are men whose own interests (or the interests of those dear to them) are involved in the matter, and are likely to be injured by your acting prudently for yourself. **Not be informed** : Because if they are not informed, they are free to do what they think fit, regardless of your interests ; whereas if you consult them beforehand, they may feel some scruple in pursuing the course most advantageous to them. In short, it would be taking undue advantage of their good nature or generosity.

## ESSAY VIII.

### SECRECY.

#### Substance of the Paragraphs :

1. Secrecy is much oftener implied than expressly enjoined, and is equally binding in either case.

2. It is a gross breach of trust to betray the confidences of social intercourse ; and when, as commonly happens, only a part of a conversation is reported, its drift is very likely to be misunderstood.

3. Conversation generally implies some degree of mutual confidence ; to repeat it to others is to show oneself unworthy of that confidence.

4. Habitual and unnecessary reserve is a failing, due to (i) natural timidity, (ii) suspicious temper, (iii) unhappy experience, (iv) inability to understand when, how, or to whom to confide.

5. A happy combination of openness and reserve comes not by studying rules, but chiefly from uprightness aided by tact and sympathy.

6. Even when a thing has become generally known, one ought not to betray the fact that it was once confided to him.

7. Men worthy of confidence : (i) grave proud men, (ii) men trained in any business requiring secrecy.

8. Men unworthy of confidence : (i) vain men who play with a secret, (ii) fools who let it out by accident, (iii) simple-minded unsuspecting people.

9. A trifling secret is harder to keep than a weighty one.

10. A secret anxiety unpleasant to be reminded of should not be entrusted even to one's dearest friends.

11-12. Do not burden any one with a secret difficult or dangerous for him to keep.

**Para 1. For once** : You are but rarely enjoined in so many words to keep a secret ; much more frequently you are left to understand from the circumstances under which something is told you, that you should not repeat it to others. *For once* and *a hundred times* mean that the latter is far more common than the first—if secrecy is formally imposed *once*, it is implied *a hundred times*. **Secrecy**—the task or duty of keeping a thing secret ; not letting others know what one has heard. **Formally**—expressly ;

explicitly ; in due form. **Imposed**—enjoined ; solemnly laid (as a duty.) **Implied** : it is understood or taken for granted that you will not divulge what you hear ; you are expected to infer or understand &c. **Concurrent**—attendant ; accompanying (the communication.) **All that** : This and the following sentence illustrate how secrecy is often implied. **As to**—because you are ; trusting you as. *As.....friend* is an adverbial phrase (to *says*) meaning ‘confidentially.’ **Intrusted etc.**—meant solely for your ears ; uttered “in the perfect careless of friendship” (*F. in C.* vol. I.) **Hour of affliction**—when he is in trouble ; in times of adversity. (It is well known that suffering, whether physical or mental, often makes people more communicative, or less reserved, than they usually are. This is due to a “craving for sympathy”, as we are told below—such sympathy being a great source of comfort.) **Sudden anger**—burst of temper. **Outpouring**—effusion. When, under the influence of strong emotion, he lays bare his feelings before you. **Sacred**—inviolable ; religiously kept—locked in your own breast, not to be divulged on any account. **Craving** yearning ; intense longing. **As to.....soul** : A friend being a man’s double or second self, as it were. All exercise of true love and friendship may be regarded as an extension of one’s personality or self.

**Para 2. Repeat**—echo ; say to others. **Social intercourse**—conversations in which one is not on his guard ; *e.g.* talk at the dinner table, or in the confidences of private life. **Sad treachery**—grievous breach of trust ; gross or miserable act of betrayal. This is explained in the next para. **With fairness**—faithfully ; without misrepresenting or exaggerating anything. **Misconstrued**—wrongly interpreted. **Many meanings** : When we refer to a dictionary for the meaning of a word, we are often bewildered by the great variety of senses in which it is used, if the language is imperfectly known. **Without the context**—if we do not know in what connection the word occurs. *Context* here stands for the whole conversation in the course of which those words were said that are repeated elsewhere. See Essay IV. Para 5.

**Para 3. Imply**—presuppose ; tacitly involve. **Confidence**—trust that the words will not be repeated to any one at random, or at least will not be exaggerated, distorted, or taken unfair advantage of in any way. [This is well explained elsewhere by the author : “A man should consider that in whatever company he is thrown, there were certain duties incident upon him in respect of that association. The first of these is *reticence about what he hears in that society*. We see this as regards the intercourse of intimate friends. If your friend in a quiet walk with you were to tell you of some of his inner troubles and vexations, you would not consider yourself at liberty to mention these things in general society the next day. So, in all social intercourse, there is an im-



*plied faithfulness of the members of the society, one to another ; and if this faithfulness were well maintained, not only would a great deal of mischief be prevented, but men knowing that they were surrounded by people with a nice sense of honour in this respect, would be more frank and explicit in all they said or did. As it is, a thoughtful and kind-hearted man is often obliged to make his discourse very barren lest it should be repeated in a circle for whom it was not intended, by whom it could not be understood ; and who can rarely have before them the circumstances which led to its being uttered."* Essay on the *Art of Living, Friends in Council*, vol. I.] **Peculiar**—"addressed to the present company alone"; intended for a particular set of hearers. **Confided etc.**—entrusted to them as a secret. **Like them** : e.g. persons who have reached a certain level of culture, who are free from certain prejudices, &c. **Has no scruple** : unhesitatingly gives out. **Pays but.....himself**—puts a low value on himself ; disparages or degrades himself (unwittingly, of course). Because he makes himself out to be quite an ordinary or commonplace character—one wanting all individuality or distinctiveness. See below. **Market place** : before the public. The *forum* or the market-place of Rome was a public resort, not only for purposes of barter, but as a centre of news, a place to discuss all manner of topics in, &c. **Average man**—no better than the ordinary run of men, one who has nothing to mark him off from others—a colourless "invertebrate" type of humanity. **Which I doubt** : But I think no one is prepared to look upon himself as quite an ordinary or common place character. [The author means that it is because people fail to see things in this light, that they commit this breach of social confidence, for everybody likes to fancy himself possessing some claims to social consideration.] We have here an instance of intentional understatement ; *doubt whether* being really equivalent to *do not believe that*.

**Para 4. On the other hand** : while many persons give out thoughtlessly what they should keep secret, others go to the opposite extreme ; they have a habit of keeping things secret even when there is no reason to do so. **It is the least** : even if we put the case in the mildest possible way, we must say that such secrecy is wholly uncalled for. That is, we might use stronger language, and say that to make everything a secret is an absurd or ridiculous practice ; but without going so far, it must be admitted that the practice is productive of no good. *The least* is equiv. to 'the least damaging or harsh thing'—the most charitable remark. **Proceeds from**—is the result of ; is traceable to. **In-nate**—inborn ; constitutional. **Suspicious**—i.e. inclined to suppose that others might take advantage of anything they are told. **Betrayed**—played false ; deceived. **Oppressed**—tyrannised over. **Failing**—weakness ; defect of character. (Why it should be



called a failing, is clear from what follows). **As cunning** : Just as some people who are wanting in real ability or firmness of character, try to make up for it by slyness, by being crafty ; so there are men wanting in prudence, who take refuge in reserve. **Cunning** : Compare Bacon's well-known remarks on the subject : "We take cunning for a sinister or crooked wisdom ; and certainly there is a great difference between a cunning man and a wise man—not only in point of honesty, but in point of ability.....Such men are good but in their own alley ; turn them to new men, and they have lost their aim.....Nothing doth more hurt in a state than that cunning men pass for wise." (*Essay* xxii.) **This sort**—*i.e.* unmeaning and indiscriminate reserve is the only kind of prudence which some people possess. **When or how much etc.**—In his *Essay on Simulation and Dissimulation*, Bacon points out the difference between *art or policy* and mere *closeness*—the latter being only necessary for those wanting in discernment : "For if a man have that penetration of judgment, as he can discern what things are to be laid open, and what to be secreted, and what to be shown at half-lights, and to whom and when (which, indeed, are arts of state and arts of life), to him a habit of dissimulation is a hindrance and a poorness. But if a man cannot obtain to that judgment, then it is left to him generally to be close and a dissembler.....like the going softly by one that cannot well see. Certainly the ablest men that ever were, have had all an openness and frankness of dealing." **Pythagorean**—such as Pythagoras imposed on new or intending disciples ; hence, absolute, religious. **I would not have** : I would not certainly advise him to be otherwise than silent or reserved (because it would not be safe for such a man to depart from the practice) ; but he must not fancy that it is wise to maintain such reserve. It is his want of wisdom that makes reserve necessary for him.

**Para 5. Happy union**—fortunate combination ; golden medium between etc. **Studying rules**—merely attending to general directions—(for the subject is too complicated to admit of hard and fast rules.) **Either for &c.**—As to when to be frank, or when to be reserved. **It results** : If a man is to be at once candid and cautious, he should above all things be perfectly honest as to his intentions, and should also be scrupulously anxious not to hurt the feelings of others. **Enlightened**—instructed ; made refined. **Very far**—a great way. That is, if we are at once upright and careful not to wound the feelings of others, we shall then be pretty sure not to divulge what we should suppress etc. **Go very far**—serve in great measure. **In those etc.**—as regards the affairs of others. **The stone** : (A good instance of aphorism—a pregnant saying). Absolute reserve as well as indiscriminate frankness are equally objectionable ; both exhibit want of sympathy or indifference to other people's feelings. Or—A man disposed to conceal

everything may be likened to an opaque piece of stone, while one who is too confiding or open resembles a bright metal the surface of which acts as a mirror; both characters are imperfect and indicate an equal want of feeling. **In which nothing**—which absorbs all light, or reflects nothing. **Hard**—*i.e.*, callous. **Insensible**—unfeeling.

**Para 6. Made public**—no longer a secret; comes to be well known. **Proclaim**—ostentatiously declare; freely tell people. **Confided to your secrecy**—entrusted to you as a secret. **No trifling breach**—a serious violation; a grievous betrayal of trust; (because some other people who think they had greater claims to be trusted, may be deeply offended by the preference shown to you.) **Left for you**—then in your power. It is implied that vain people cannot resist the temptation of exclaiming triumphantly, “I know it all along”, when a secret begins to be talked about—though it may cause much mischief to let out who were in possession of the secret.

**Para 7. With respect to**—as regards. **Safe confidants**—persons sure to keep a secret well. **Any business etc.**—*e. g.*, some delicate negotiation, or piece of diplomacy.

**Para 8. A question**—doubtful. **Escape**—leak out; be let out. **Vain man**: A man who courts admiration is likely to boast of his having an important secret entrusted to him. This gives rise to suspicion or curiosity, close questioning etc., which a weak man can hardly resist. **Simpleton**—a man of weak intellect; a fool. **Play with**—amuse themselves (and others) with, *i.e.* give themselves airs of importance, talk mysteriously, shake their heads, look grave, etc.: **It is suggested**: some shrewd person, who knows something of the affair, receives a sufficient hint, or is enabled to guess correctly what the secret is. **Wear the secret** (a good instance of balance or antithesis in a sentence; the style is a close imitation of Bacon’s)—use the secret as a thing to boast of; glory in the possession of the secret (and drop hints which allow the secret to escape.) **Accident**—a thoughtless word; unguarded statement. **Sell**—intentionally betray. **Simple-minded**—innocent, or unsuspecting; disposed to think others to be as honest or unselfish as themselves. **With whom.....smoothly**—who have always been fortunate and have never been deceived; who have not learnt by painful experience how crooked the ways of men often are—how readily some people play false. **Make any mischief of**—use to the injury of others. **Disclose**—reveal; divulge.

**Para 9. Of weight enough**—sufficiently important; not too trivial. **Your small secrets**—petty matters which one wishes to conceal. **Your** has no particular application—a use very common in Elizabethan English; compare.—

“Your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander  
—Drink ho!—are nothing to your English.”—*Othello*, ii. 3.

**Greatest care** : Because it is difficult to be on one's guard, to be always careful, not to let out a petty secret. **Hardly to be** : quite natural. **If there is nothing** : when the secrets are so trifling that one is apt to forget that he was expected to keep them as secrets.

**Para 10. It is that** : The reason for not being quite frank even with intimate friends, is that the latter may thoughtlessly talk to you about those troubles which you wish to forget (for though sincere friends, they may not be sufficiently thoughtful to avoid mentioning unpleasant matters.) **Put them aside**—keep such anxieties from worrying you. **Tact**—*lit.* delicacy of touch ; power to avoid anything likely to give offence. (As Helps says elsewhere, such tact requires deep and delicate sympathy.) **When to be silent**—that sometimes a man is pained by expressions of sympathy etc. (for they remind him of what is unpleasant) and is anxious that his friend should not allude to his misfortune.

**Para 11. Unnecessarily**—*i.e.* when you can do without the advice or sympathy of that particular friend. **Hard matter** : this is explained below—"which may expose him" etc. **Expose**—subject : make him liable to incur. **Somebody's displeasure**—the anger of a third party (the parent, guardian, or dear friend of the person to whom you impart the secret.) **Object.....confidence**—person in whom you confided ; recipient of your secret ; your confidant. **Indulged**—gratified. **Dragging &c.**—forcing others to share ; involving others in. The sentence means—It would be unpardonably selfish of you (or, you have no right) to put others to trouble on your account, that you may obtain the assistance or sympathy you long for. Compare concluding para of the Essay on *Advice*.

**Para 12. As much responsibility**—as great reason to be scrupulous, or careful. This sentence, in which the preceding para is summarised, means : It is quite as wrong to burden another thoughtlessly with your own secrets (when it is likely to injure him, or place him in a delicate position), as it is to betray a secret entrusted to you. Or, You ought to exercise no less care and discretion in choosing a confidant, than when you are chosen as such by another.

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**NOTES**

**ON**

**ESSAYS**

**WRITTEN IN THE INTERVALS OF BUSINESS.**

**PART II.**

## PART II.

### Passage quoted from Bacon.

Francis Bacon (1561-1625), Lord Verulam, and Viscount St. Albans, rose to be Lord Chancellor of England, but is best known as a great writer and philosopher, who elaborated a new method (*Novum Organum*) of inquiry into the secrets of nature, or of discovering scientific truths. His famous *Essays* embody the results of his worldly experience and his deep insight into the character and affairs of men. This is also the subject of a part (Book II. Ch. 23) of his great work on the *Advancement of Learning*—the part in which the passage here quoted occurs. This work is mainly a defence of learning, and a masterly review of the state of human knowledge in Bacon's time, as exhibited in the books extant in the various languages of Europe, both ancient and modern. In Ch. xxiii. Book II. of the *Advancement*, Bacon treats of "civil knowledge"—*i. e.* rules of behaviour for men in society dealing with each other: he gives instances of such rules, and regrets that there are no books giving practical advice for successfully dealing with others—the more so, because the absence of such books leads men to infer that those who write books, as well as those who spend their time in reading, do not possess worldly wisdom. (This regret is expressed in the passage here given.)

**Touching**—concerning. **Negotiation**—practical conduct of business; dealings with other men. **To the great derogation**—thus causing serious disparagement; so as to lower learning in the estimation of men. *Derogation* (L. *derogo* to repeal or modify part of a law, from *de* privative, and *rogo* = to ask, or propose) means taking something away from; detraction; lessening the value or estimation. **Professors etc.**—men who write or read books; who are called learned. **This root**—the cause or reason given above—*viz.*, the absence of books dealing with the practical conduct of business. **Springeth**—arises. **Note** (obsolete in this sense)—observation; remark. **By us**: in English. **Adage**—current saying. **No great concurrence**—not much connection; *i. e.* learned men are not generally found to be wise. **Wisdoms**—kinds of wisdom. This plural use of a purely abstract noun is obsolete now. **Set down to pertain**—stated as belonging. *Set down* = write or report. **Civil life**—life of men in society. *Civil* is nearly obsolete in this sense. **For wisdom**: *For* has the force of *as for, concerning*. **Wisdom of behaviour**: called also "wisdom of conversation," of which Bacon says (in the para preceding



this)—it “ought not to be over much affected (=cared for), but much less despised.....The sum of behaviour is to retain a man’s own dignity, without intruding upon the liberty of others....., *Again such as are accomplished in that form of urbanity, please themselves (i.e. are contented) in it, and seldom aspire to higher virtue.* **An inferior** (not idiomatic now)—something inferior. See above extract. **Enemy to meditation**: If a man is very careful about his behaviour, he has to bestow so much time and thought upon this, as to have none to spare for study. “It consumeth time, and employeth the mind too much.....The intending of the discretion of behaviour is a great thief of meditation” (preceding para). **For wisdom of government**—As for the wise management of state affairs—performing the duties of a statesman. **They acquit**: learned men show themselves competent when they are called upon to administer public affairs, but few men of learning ever occupy high position in the state. [As instances of this we may take Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Pope Pius V., Sir Thomas More, and in our own days Mr. Gladstone. In Book I. ch. ii. of the *Advancement*, Bacon deals at some length with the current prejudices against learned men, and observes among other things:—“For matter of policy and government, that learning should rather hurt, than enable thereunto, is a thing very improbable.....It is almost, without instance contradictory that ever any government was disastrous that was in the hands of learned governors. For, in the records of time it appeareth in many particulars that the government of princes in minority (notwithstanding the infinite disadvantage of that kind of state) have nevertheless excelled the government of princes of mature age, even for that reason that the state hath been in the hands of *pedantes*; for so was the state of Rome for the five years during the minority of Nero, in the hands of Seneca; so it was again, for ten years’ space or more, during the minority of Gordianus the younger, with great applause in the hands of Misiheus.”] **Wherein.....conversant**—with which men are more occupied than with anything else. **Scattered advertisement**—detached or stray precepts. *Advertisement* is here used in the obsolete sense of direction, or rule for guidance. **Have no proportion to**—are quite insignificant in comparison to; utterly inadequate to. **As the other**—as books have been written on the other two kinds of wisdom. **Doubt not but**—am quite sure that. **Mean**—but slight; small. **Outshoot**—shoot farther than; excel. **Own bow**—specialty; what they pretend to know best. That is, learned men, if aided by books on the subject, would surpass ordinary men of great experience, even in those matters which the former are especially conversant in. The metaphor is from archery—an archer is as a rule able to shoot best with his own bow, but a man of superior skill can shoot well with any bow.

The **substance** of the extract : It is much to be regretted that there are no regular treatises but merely some precepts on the art of conducting business. This want has caused learning and learned men to suffer in the estimation of the world, to be looked upon as incompetent to deal wisely with their fellowmen. There are books relating to the two other kinds of knowledge useful in life—knowledge relating to behaviour and to the art of government ; the first is indeed looked down upon as interfering with study, and as to the latter but few learned men have been called upon to govern, though these few have acquitted themselves well. If there were books on the wise conduct of business, learned men would be equally successful in business, and would certainly excel men guided solely by practical experience.

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## ESSAY I.

### EDUCATION OF A MAN OF BUSINESS.

#### Substance of the paragraphs :

1. Love of truth essential, (i) because it makes a man act with simplicity, and therefore with less chance of error, (ii) because it develops the understanding by constantly exercising it on questions of right and wrong.

2. Charity and moral qualities also make a wiser man of business.

3. Formation of principles is essential. Even unsound principles are better than none, if there is enough love of truth to make a man change any, when found erroneous.

4. A man of business should be at once sanguine and calm in temperament.

5-6. He should have the habit of promptly deciding for himself, which is different from the deliberate judgment required to choose principles, and which can be acquired only in practice, not by mere study.

7. The study of geometry is useful for acquiring a habit of close reasoning.

8. A wide general culture is necessary to make the mind agile and supply a variety of information, and enable one to understand men better.

9. Metaphysical studies are useful in giving a breadth and vigour to one's mode of thinking.

10. The works of Bacon may be studied with great profit, after leaving school and before entering the world.

11. What is studied is not of so much importance as how it is studied. The student should exercise himself in preparing digests, and arranging his materials, writing narratives, and weighing conflicting evidence, so as to acquire method and the power of expressing his views clearly.

12. A habit of expressing himself with accuracy brevity and readiness should be acquired by early practice.

13. Repetition of the same word need not be avoided in business writing.

14-19. Qualifications of a thorough man of business : (i) Ability to fix his attention on details, and to hear all manner of arguments ; (2) ability not merely to collect and arrange materials but effectually use them for his purposes ; (3) courage ; (4) patient temperament ; (5) a strong and well-trained imagination ; (6) a deep sense of responsibility ; (7) diligence, accuracy and discretion. (These last, however, will follow from the preceding.)

**Para 1. Cultivated**—developed by practice. **First** : before

the intellectual qualities—it being more necessary for him to be honest than to be clever. **Betimes**—early ; at the very threshold of his career. **That same love** : If a man loves truth, he will find himself able to steer clear of the endless difficulties that beset a man in his worldly career—to escape the dangers in the path to wealth and fame, and not merely all temptation to act unscrupulously. **That same**—this very ; *i. e.* the love of truth we are speaking of. **Potent charm**—powerful talisman ; amulet of great virtue (*e.g.* “the ring of Eastern story” referred to in para 8. Essay III.) **Bear him safely**—enable him to go unscathed, or uninjured. **Entanglements**—intricacies ; occasions on which it is difficult to make out the right path, or follow the proper line of conduct ; (for instance, where some mean or unscrupulous action promises great results, or when there seems to be a conflict between duty and interest. He who loves truth is not likely to be led astray in such cases ; he acts upon the maxim, *Honesty is the best policy.*) **I mean safely** : even from a purely worldly point of view, (or, even if we set aside higher considerations) the most prudent course is to be always upright. Safety in a worldly sense is the avoidance of all that might interfere with the acquisition of power, wealth, praise &c. **With more simplicity**—in a more upright or straightforward manner. **Less chance of error** : Because it requires greater caution to avoid fatal mistakes when following the crooked path of policy. “It is a sleepless business”, as Helps says elsewhere. **Conduces to**—contributes or leads to ; tends to secure. **Intellectual development**—growth of the mental powers ; culture of the mind. This is explained below. **The statesman** : See note para 6, Essay on *Advice*. **The correspondences** : There are a great many points of agreement between &c. ; wisdom and goodness are mutually related or strengthen each other, in a variety of ways. **That they.....inferred**—It may be concluded that a wise man will also be good (and *vice versa.*) Compare :

“Wisdom and goodness are twin-born, one heart  
Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.”

Cowper's *Expostulation*.

**Questions.....and see**—Those who are anxious to determine whether their own actions and the actions of others are right or wrong, have their powers of thought sharpened by constant exercise on such topics. That is, moral earnestness assists in the development of a man's thinking powers, by setting his faculties at work on questions of right and wrong in his own conduct as well as that of others about him. **Are.....exercise**—give constant employment ; always bring into play, or actively engage. **Solicitous**—deeply concerned, or interested. **Deep interest of the heart**—to have one's feelings deeply touched or engaged. **Carries with it**—necessarily effects ; is sure to produce, or result in. **Excitement**

—stimulus ; spur. **Intellectual activity**—exercise of the mental powers. The sentence means—When a man feels deeply on questions of right and wrong, his intellect is sure to be effectually cultivated by pondering over them ; nothing else can furnish an equally strong motive to exercise his powers of thought.

**Para 2. Charity**—disposition to think well of others—to avoid forming a hasty judgment against any one. See Essay IV. Part. I., para 7. **Enlightens**—illuminates ; enables one to judge more wisely. **Purifies the heart**—frees one from degrading passions—*e.g.*, envy, meanness, selfishness etc. A reference to the words of the Bible :

“ Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth ”

*Ess. to the Corinthians, viii.*

**Girt about**—surrounded ; attended. The reference to the saying *Knowledge is Power* (*i.e.* command over the external world.) The sentence means : Goodness is as sure to endow a man with wisdom, as knowledge endows him with power. Or—There is as close a connection between goodness and wisdom, as between &c.

**Para 3. Principles**—rules of conduct. **Thrown on etc.**—when he has to discharge the manifold business of life ; amidst the whirl of business. **Rudder and compass**—any means of directing his course, and of knowing which path is right. **Best results** : study is most useful when it enables a man to form principles. **Political economy**—the Science of Wealth (which inquires into such subjects as commerce, taxation, wages, prices, etc.) **Ethics**—Moral Philosophy, or Moral Science. **Are to be the reward** : will repay him for the pains he takes to study such subjects. It is implied that unless he can arrive at principles, the work of mastering such subjects is hardly worth the trouble. **Law in the physical world**—Law of Nature (or invariable relation between cause and effect, such as the physical sciences deal with.) **It can seldom** : a moral principle can hardly be regarded as infallible or universally true, as a Law of Nature is. **As the facts** : the reason being that a moral principle has to account for and be applied to facts (*viz.* the acts of men, their motives &c.) which cannot be ascertained and estimated so very accurately, as external objects can. The sentence means : As laws of nature are the valuable results arrived at in physical sciences, so principles of action or rules of conduct are the conclusions for which such subjects as history, ethics &c., deserve to be studied ; though it must be admitted that these latter are not so unquestionably correct, as the conclusions of physical science ; the reason being that the facts (or data) on which the conclusions drawn in history etc. are based, cannot be known with so much precision. The author refers to the usual remark, that the moral sciences (those which deal with human actions) are less “certain” than Mathematics or physics ;



he observes that this is true in one sense, but that we need not suppose that the reasoning in the former is unreliable—the difference in point of “certainty” being due to the superior accuracy with which the facts of the external world can be ascertained. Compare Prof. Blackie’s observations on the subject in his *Self-Culture*, pp. 7-8—“On political, moral, and social questions our reasonings are not less certain etc.” **Certainty**—undeniable truth. **Embrace**—comprehend ; take into account. **Do not admit**—are not susceptible, or capable. **Exactness**—mathematical accuracy. **Adopts**—accepts as true (to regulate his conduct and judgment.) **Unsound**—erroneous. **Insufficient**—inadequate ; not such as to meet all cases. **And must only** : all that is necessary is that he should keep alive a strong love of truth, so that he may be prepared to give up any of his principles, as soon as he discovers its unsoundness. That is, he should keep an open mind, he should not be obstinate in error.

**Para 4. Much depends** : For success in business, it is of great importance to have a happy temperament. **It should be hopeful** : There are so many discouraging circumstances which every one—even the most successful—has to face, that it is essential for a man of business to have a sanguine temperament ; otherwise he will not be able to avoid being depressed by the timidity, folly and falseness of those he deals with. **Hopeful**—not easily cast down ; the reverse of *despondent*. **Bear him up against**—make him proof against ; enable him to withstand or resist the depressing influence of. **Faintheartedness**—absence of moral courage ; irresolution (on the part of others.) **Discouragements**—circumstances likely to make one lose heart. **Calm**—serene ; not easily ruffled, or excited. **Driven wild**—off his head ; violently agitated, or utterly bewildered. **By any great pressure**—when he has a vast amount of work to get through in a short time. **Lose his head**—be quite puzzled or flurried ; not know what to do, his brain may be in a ferment. **Rushing &c.**—hastily quitting (or leaving unfinished) one business and taking up another (as candidates often do with the questions in an examination paper.) **Wished for**—desirable. **Conjunction**—union. See essay on *Practical Wisdom*, para 6. **Rare** : for men of a sanguine temperament are generally excitable, and inclined to be hasty ; while men of a calm temperament are usually plegmatic, fond of ease, and better fitted to advise others than to act for themselves. **Provide against** : make his shortcomings cause as little mischief as possible.

**Para 5. Thinking for himself**—rely on his judgment in forming opinions etc. (instead of taking them ready-made from others, or echoing the views of others.) **Decision**—power of acting promptly, of making up one’s mind (opposed to *vacillation*). **Actually wanted** : until one is called upon to act in real life. **Play at deciding**—decide in cases which you fancy yourself acting



in ; develope your power of acting promptly by placing yourself in imaginary circumstances. The author means—You may indeed amuse yourself by imagining how you would act under such and such circumstances ; but that would not give you the power of acting with decision when a real crisis comes. **Must have realities** : To acquire the habit, you must have actual experience in deciding—you must be placed in circumstances actually requiring prompt decision.

**Para 6. It is of that kind.....judgment**—In adopting rules of conduct for yourself, the decision required is such as to exercise the power of judging calmly—of weighing various conclusions, or lines of reasoning. **Within call**—prompt ; at once available or ready—as opposed to “*deliberate* judgment.” **Does not judge &c.**—requires rather the power of anticipating and facing the consequences of a step, than of weighing its merits carefully. For if a man weighs the merits of all the different lines of action open to him, he is unable to decide promptly. **Foresees** : for of course one should not decide blindly, or take a leap in the dark. **Thrown early** : who have had to shift for themselves when young ; who had no father or guardian to take care of them (and to decide what was best for them) till they reached full manhood. **In great freedom** : who were allowed much liberty (or a “long tether”) in youth ; who were not strictly tied to their duties in early life.

**Para 7. Course of study**—curriculum ; a definite range of subjects. **Not technical**—*i.e.* liberal or aimed at general culture *Technical* (*lit.* belonging to an art) study,—the study for the particular calling one proposes to adopt,—is of course indispensable to a man of business, and it is easy to lay down a plan of such study. **Form—train. Closely**—(opposed to *loosely*) strictly ; logically.

**Para 8. Something like universality**—a very wide range of subjects ; a scheme embracing almost every department of knowledge. **Agile**—supple ; active (opposed to cramped, or stiff). [The ideal of thorough culture is well summed up in the words—“Something of everything and everything of something.” As Helps says elsewhere : With reference to our individual cultivation, we may remember that we are not here to promote incalculable quantities of law, physic, or manufactured goods but to become men ; not narrow pedants, but wide-seeing, mind-travelled men. Who are the men of history to be admired most ? Those whom most things became : who could be weighty in debate, of much device in council, considerate in a sick-room, genial at a feast, joyous at a festival, capable of discourse with many minds, large-souled, not to be shrivelled up into any one form, fashion, or temperament.—*Essay on Recreation, F. in C. Vol. I. Compare also Prof. Blackie’s wise remarks on this head, pp. 30-1, Self-culture.*]

**Para 9. Of a metaphysical nature**—which deal with ultimate truths or realities ; of an abstract nature. **Investigation**—deep

inquiries concerning. **Great questions**—the topics that have divided thinkers into separate schools (*e. g.* the questions of free-will and Necessity, the origin of our moral perceptions, the criterion of right and wrong, the perception of the external world etc.) **Breadth**—comprehensiveness ; largeness ; opposed to *narrowness* (what Prof. Blackie calls *shop*.) **Tone**—vigour. **Signal**—marked ; striking.

**Para 10. Technical**—strictly professional. **Soften the transition**—make the change less abrupt or sudden ; enable one, when entering the world, to find it less strange than it would otherwise appear. *Transition* means properly *passing* or *passage*. **School's**—life of a student ; scholastic career. **Particularly needed** : And such works are all the more necessary when, as is the case of education in England, the usual course of study comprises subjects which have little to do with the actual business of life. (The education imparted in schools and colleges is what is called *liberal education*, the aim of which is general culture, the knowledge acquired not being *directly* useful in business. A man is so called upon in real life to solve mathematical problems write Latin verses, or translate passages from a Greek author.) **Scarcely ever been** : Supply “in the course of his scholastic life,” before these words. **Woven into**—intimately blended with. The metaphor is—*imagination* and *philosophy* are like the warp and woof (the cross threads in a piece of cloth) of practical wisdom ; to be a man of practical wisdom one must be both imaginative and capable of deep thought. See para 4, Essay on *Practical Wisdom*. **Such are i. e.** they serve to “soften the transition” &c. &c. **Lucid order**—clearness of method. **Grasp of the subject** perfect mastery, or familiarity with all the bearings of the subject. **Comprehensiveness**—breadth. **The greatest perhaps** : no man who had not received any supernatural light (*i. e.* no profane writer) ever exhibited so great a knowledge of mankind as Bacon did. The author means that excepting Solomon (the wise king of the Jews, to whom the Book of Proverbs in the Bible are ascribed) no writer has equalled Bacon in this respect. The authors of the various Books in the Old and the New Testament are believed by Christians to have been inspired. **Practical nature** : Bacon always proposed the good of mankind as the object of Philosophy ; he ridiculed the contempt of ancient philosophers for the material blessings of mankind as either absurd or affected. [This has been regarded by Macaulay (among other writers) as Bacon's greatest claim to the gratitude of posterity—the cultivation of the physical sciences by those who followed his method having resulted in the discovery of many secrets of nature which have greatly increased the range of man's enjoyments.] **Form the best men**—prepare men in the most effective manner for managing the most important business of the state. This sentence gives us the reasons why Bacon's work are most to be recommended for training up men of business—the

reasons being Bacon's masterly treatment of the subjects he deals with, his unsurpassed knowledge of men, and the useful object he always keeps in view.

**Para 11.** **It is not**—the benefit lies &c. **Our student**—he whose plan of education is here discussed—he who to qualify himself for the practical business of life (and to be mere scholar.) **Full man**—a man stored with knowledge or wisdom—a deep scholar. **Ready**—able to bring out or apply his knowledge at any moment. The words are from Bacon's admirable essay on *Studies* "Reading maketh a full man." **Digests**—abstracts ; summaries. (One should do this himself ; it is of no use to get an abstract ready-made, or prepared by another, as is unfortunately the practice with many students.) **Classifying materials**—grouping under various heads the points of facts he has to make use of. **Deciding upon** : This is the function of a judge, who has to weigh contradictory statements, and decide on which side the truth lies. **Conflict-ing**—mutually opposed—some favouring one view ; and some the opposite view. **Evidence**—mass of proofs. **All these exercises** : To train himself to do all these things properly, he should set to work systematically (not in a random or desultory fashion). **Must expect** *i. e.* should not be discouraged to find. **Clumsy**—crude ; not finished or neat. **Any way that occurs**—tentatively ; in a haphazard way ; according to the plan that first suggests itself (and which he will have to abandon afterwards.) **No other view than** his sole object being *c.* **Logical order** : the arrangement in which each successive part is based on (or hangs on) that which precedes it. **Following**—sequence ; succession. **Rude beginnings**—first crude attempts. **Developed**—gradually acquired ; one gets into the habit of doing things methodically. **And there is.....result**—And if he thus acquires method, he would be amply repaid for any amount of labour, however severe, that the process might cost him. **A sure reward** : he will not fail to reap the advantage of having clear opinions and of being able readily to make them intelligible to others. **Bring their attention**—are ready to listen attentively. **Who gives them** : whose words are best worth listening to. **For it** : *it* stands for *attention*. **And this will be** : And hearers (or readers) are sure to derive most benefit from him who knows how to set forth his views methodically. **This**—"such a man,"—a "man who gives them" &c.

**Para 12.** **Cultivate**—try to acquire. **Flow of words**—mere verbal or mechanical fluency—dashing off page after page. **Express accurately**—the words which would precisely convey their meaning. **Indulging in**—allowing themselves to use. **Be to the purpose**—hit the mark ; serve to express their meaning. (Here a reason is suggested for the verbosity of some writers.)

**Para 13.** **Nothing.....but plainness.** He should try to write, not with elegance, but in a simple and accurate manner. **Close**

**repetition**—recurrence at no great distance—*e. g.* more than once in the same sentence. **The aversion** : People are apt to show such intense dislike to the use of the same word more than once, as it is unnecessary even in literary writing. **Too far**—to a morbid excess. **In literature**—in works read for pleasure or written for fame. **Brought to account**—called upon to answer ; made to pay the penalty—to suffer serious consequences. **Misleading**—making people misapprehend your meaning (by not using the right word for fear of repetition.) **Pay the penalty**—suffer punishment (*i. e.* find your instructions disobeyed, or your purposes condemned.) **Shunned**—avoided (for fear of repetition.)

**Para 14. Consummate**—perfect ; thorough.

**Para 15. Details**—minute points ; minutiae. Compare : “My man who is to succeed must not only be industrious, but he must have an ignominious love of details”—Ellesmere’s Essay on the *Arts of Self-Advancement* (*F. in C.* Vol. III.) **Ready to give**—prepared to listen carefully to all sorts of reasoning even if distasteful to him, or opposed to his own views.) **Encumber**—load his brain ; embarrass. **For he must** : since it is expected that he should have got already into the habit of applying his mental powers (so that his intellect may be presumed to be strong enough to bear the strain. **Strong in principles** :—So that no arguments might prevail upon him to act against his principles **One man**—*i. e.* one imperfectly trained. **Shapeless mass**—confused heap. That is some men are quite unable to arrange or use his materials, though he may be painstaking enough to gather them. **Such a man.....his materials**—A consummate man of business, however, can not only collect and arrange his materials, though he may be painstaking enough to gather them. **Such a man.....his materials**—A consummate man of business, however, can not only collect and arrange his materials, but being strong in principles, is able to make substantial use of them—to turn them to good purposes.

**Para 16. The courage, however** : What is wanted in the transactions of business, is not so much the courage expected in an ordinary soldier, but such cool and tempered courage as a general should possess. The courage of a general consists rather in making bold plans, in not losing his presence of mind in situations of the gravest danger, than in actually fighting bravely at the head of his troops (as heroes of ancient times are described as doing.) **Mere soldier** : simply physical courage, which is wanted in a common soldier. **Is serviceable**—has its use. [In Ellesmere’s cynical essay on the *Arts of Self-Advancement*, we have ? “He (*i. e.* the man who means to rise) must be brave and bold ; for civil affairs need fully as much bravery as those of the sword ; and a bold brave man may be defeated, but is seldom utterly discomfited, or his affairs put to fatal rout.”—*F. in C.* Vol. III.]



**Para 17. Stout**—brave. **Patient** : See para 4. **Vigorous but disciplined**—strong, but kept under the control of reason. See Essay I. para 4. **Large.....view**—seeing far in every direction ; taking into account remote and various possibilities. **Stretching.....grasp**—eagerly expecting to attain objects for which the time is not yet come ; premature efforts (so as to waste his energies.) **Let opportunities grow** : wait till the fulness of time is come ; not be too eager to seize the occasion as soon as it seems to present itself. This shows a calm temperament. *Grow*=mature ; *i. e.* become more and more suitable. [In Ellesmer's Essay on the *Arts of Self-Advancement*, we are told :—"There are occasions and positions in life, when every move will be a bad one. It requires great self-command at such junctures to pause, and wait ; especially for an energetic man who is used to action. But he must learn the wisdom of doing nothing—the only wisdom left him in such cases to act upon, or rather to be passive upon."] **Steadily**—without flinching ; without being terrified. That is, he will be prepared to face the prospect of failure, and not be discouraged by such possibility. **Provide**—think out or advise beforehand. **Remedy**—means of making the failure comparatively harmless—not quite ruinous. **Retreat**—means of backing out of the business before it is too late—of withdrawing from his course, or position. **Strength of repose**—Calm serene strength ; the power which comes of being prepared for every emergency—of having foreseen every danger and decided what he should do in every possible case. The sentence means—A man of patient temperament &c. will not be flurried or agitated (as weak men are in the prospect of danger)—his conscious strength will prevent him from wasting his energies in nervous excitement.

**Para 18. Sense of responsibility** : He must deeply feel that he is answerable for the way in which he discharges his duties ; he must realise how much depends on his doing all that he should do and how culpable any neglect of it would be. **Power and vitality** : that truth is strong and must prevail. *Vitality*=living force, abiding influence.

**Para 19. Almost inevitably** : can hardly fail to give him ; is pretty sure to enable him to acquire. **Discreetness**—caution ; prudence ; A man is called discreet when he does not make blunders through excess of zeal or want of tact. **Commonplace** ordinary ; not of a high or rare order. [Worldly men lay most stress on these qualities ; but our author wisely holds that these though indispensable, will not fail to be possessed by a man who has the higher qualities,—that "the Essential qualities of a man of business are of a moral nature." This illustrates the healthy tone of these *Essays*.] **All the rest** : the other qualities—ability, courage &c.—which a man of business should possess. **Translated**

(obsolete in this wider sense)—transferred from theory to practice); actually carried or applied. The phrase is from Bacon.

## ESSAY II.

### ON THE TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS.

**Substance** of the paragraphs :

1. Subject divided.

(1) *Dealing with others about Business.*

2. Only general rules on the subject are stated here.

3. Dexterity should be used negatively only in baffling the cunning of deceitful people, not in deceiving others.

4. No gratitude is to be expected in return for a concession, as it is forced from one, and amounts to partial defeat.

5. In entering into a compromise, little is to be gained by concealing one's views.

6. Delay is often the only means of conquering the obstinacy of some people.

7. Beware of being prevailed upon to do what your conscience condemns, in moment of weariness.

8. Foolish people ought to be gained over as early as possible ; for their constant outcry might cause mischief.

9. It is well sometimes to consult those whose nature and views are different from yours.

(2). *Dealing with the Business itself.*

10. The collection and arrangement of materials should (i) be thorough, (ii) should not be in pursuance of a preconceived theory, and (iii) should not be left to others.

11. Use method and economy in thinking and deciding upon the materials. Deliberately put down on paper every step you take towards a decision.

12. Avoid all vague generalities in communicating your decision.

13. State your motives only when you can do so fully.

14. Use bold but not unkind sincerity in communicating the motives of an unfavourable decision.

15. Let your statement of the history of a business be plainly methodical, and such as can be followed by those ignorant of the subject.

16. It is well to write out an abstract of the reasons which moved you to a decision, for future reference.

17-8. A brief record should be kept of the correspondence about an affair, and all papers should be arranged on a simple plan. A neglect of these little matters might cause great mischief.

**Transaction**—carrying-through ; performing.



**Para 2. General subject**—subject as a whole. **Embraces**—includes, **Colleagues**—fellow-workers. **Naturally find**—be fittingly introduced.

**Para 3. Converse**—intercourse; dealing. **Anything like**—the least appearance. **Juggling dexterity**—skill to hoodwink others (such as the sleight of hand exhibited by a juggler; petty tricks serving to impose on others. The author speaks contemptuously of the sort of dexterity often highly admired by worldly men of a low moral type. See Bacon's *Essay on Cunning*. **Circumvented** (*lit.* come round) taken in; deceived; made a fool of, or duped. **Aggressive**—aimed against others; seeking to deceive others. The author means you should use what cleverness or skill you may have to avoid being deceived by cunning men; but you should not go about trying to deceive others yourself—your dexterity should be purely defensive.

**Para 4. Concessions**—yielding certain points; act of giving up something to satisfy the demand of the other party. **Compromise**—coming to an agreement (by mutual concession); mutual agreement in which each side gives up something to satisfy the other. **Form a large part**: On a great many occasions it is necessary for us to yield something &c. in order to get on with our fellow-men. **Must generally**: are for the most part such as must be thought clear admissions of weakness. That is, whenever you yield something to arrive at an agreement, it is pretty sure to be thought that you were not strong enough to carry your point—that you were *obliged* to make the concession. **Expect no gratitude**: It would be unreasonable for you to expect that the other side should be thankful to you for the concessions because it will be taken for granted that you had no choice in the matter, that you made them simply because you could not help doing so. **I am far**: I do not at all mean that &c., I admit that it is often prudent to yield some points—and not remain quite stiff or impracticable. **Nature of them**—what concessions really mean (*viz.* that they are confessions of weakness—that they will not be regarded as favours.)

**Para 5. Think to gain**—fancy that you will derive much advantage. That is, it will generally be best to avow your views frankly; it is a mistake to pretend that you have other ends in view than what you really cherish. This is explained below. **You are as likely**: There is no less danger of your failing to attain your ends through ignorance of your wishes on the part of others, than through actual attempts to get the better of you on the part of those who knew what you really desire. The author means that though cunning people might take undue advantage of what they learn of your wishes, yet there is least as much danger if you keep the other party in the dark about your views; for in the latter case even if people really wish to please you, they may fail through not knowing what you wish—and so your interests may suffer through a

mistake. The lesson taught is that honesty or straightforwardness often more prudent than clever dissimulation. **Overreach**—circumvent ; baffle or deceive by superior cunning. **Grounded**—which (*attempt*) is based upon.

**Para 6. Advisedly**—deliberately ; of set purpose. **Brings to reason**—makes one see his folly or error ; cause to act or behave in a rational manner—to take a sound view of the matter. **Could** : could bring &c. ; *i.e.* when a man is so obstinate or perverse that unless he is left to find out his error in time (by means of delay), he will stick to his ideas or intentions, inspite of all arguments to the contrary. **Occupied**—engrossed ; wholly taken up. **Overestimates**—exaggerates ; sets absurdly high value on ; *i.e.* he forgets how insignificant the matter is, compared to others. **Brought**—induced. **Calmly**—dispassionately. **Any force**—any arguments, however strong, or cogent. **This disease** : *i.e.* a morbid and irrational persistency ( in the teeth of all arguments, in exaggerating the importance of something.) **Time ..doctor**—Time alone can cure a man of &c. ; it is only by means of delay that a man can be taught to take a sensible view of the matter.

**Para 7. Watchful**—vigilant. **Prevent things** : that he might not allow himself to be prevailed upon to do what he thinks wrong—to act in opposition to the dictates of his conscience. **Lassitude**—weariness (of body or mind) ; weakness, or prostration of energy, When such a moment comes, is explained below. **To the purpose**—profitably ; so as to decide a matter ; not in a vague or irrelevant manner. **Settled**—finally decided ; set at rest. **Handiest**—most ready at hand ; easiest to reach, or pursue. **Getting rid of**—disposing of any how ; having done with, See Essay on *Practical Wisdom* para 5—“getting rid of rather than completing” &c. **Taken for the best**—regarded as the best ; adopted as if it were the most advisable course to take.

**Para 8. Worth while**—not useless, or superfluous. **Gaining over**—securing the assent of ; winning over. **Always have** : *i.e.* whether the reasons (which are supposed to be sound) are given at an early stage, or afterwards. **Form prejudices**—have time to grow prejudiced against your views—to adopt opinions opposed to yours. **Consistent** (here)—obstinate ; not inclined to change his opinions. (The author takes several occasions to point out how much better openness of mind is to a love of consistency, which is so liable to degenerate into blind adherence to error. See essay on *Domestic Rule*, para 15, ) **Repetition**—stating the same opinions again and again (boasting of his firmness and strong principles.) **In season** &c.—at all times (whether unseasonable or not.) **Has hearing**—comes to be listened or attended to ; is believed in by the world (simply because it is heard again and again.) **It is hard** : The chances are that what the fools go on saying will sometimes appear to be supported or borne out by outward circumstances ; *i.e.* it is

not unlikely that those who do not look beneath the surface will sometimes find certain circumstances seemingly in favour of it. **Hard if**=hardly likely that. **Chime in**—agree with, tally or coincide with.

**Para 9. Quite different**: Compare Essay on Advice, para 6. **few**: few persons are endowed (by nature. **Sternness**—rigid or unbending firmness. **Fixedness**—strong adherence; resoluteness. **Of purpose**: to be connected with *fixedness* only, not with *sternness*. **Entering into**—understanding. To enter into the characters of others, it is necessary to be sympathetic and gentle; but one who is gentle is again likely to be wanting in sternness &c. **Tact**—power of managing men, of avoiding offence. **Unprepared for**—surprised by; taken aback and discouraged by. **The extent &c.**—on finding how very unsteady and hesitating men often are. **Versatility** used here in a bad sense, for ‘changeableness’ ‘want of fixed opinions and purposes,’ tergiversation. The word is now more often used in a good sense—ability of a varied kind, power of doing many things well. **Vacillation**—irresolute character; disposition to waver; want of steadiness. **Oversights**—mistakes. **Supplementary &c.**—supplying his own deficiencies; what, added to his own qualities, would make a perfect man of business. **Depth of mind**—solid intellectual powers; opposed to shallowness. **Can bear i. e.** are not oppressed or distracted by a variety of advice from different men. **Deface**—obliterate, remove the marks of. That is, shallow natures may be so much influenced by advice as to act in ways contrary to their character; but men of strong character do not run that risk—their actions still retain the impress of their characters, though they may have taken counsel with several other people. **Indistinct**—vague; undefined.

#### DEALING WITH THE BUSINESS ITSELF.

**Para 10. Materials**—information or facts (to be used in forming plans, or deciding upon the proper course to pursue.) **Earliest history**: It is clear that the author is speaking of business of a political nature, plans for the redress of grievances or reform of any kind. **Give way to**—be wholly under the influence of; be dominated by. The author says that in order to be able impartially to collect facts, one should not be prepossessed in favour of any theory so far as to lose the power of independent judgment in the matter. **In the choice**: If you allow yourself to be carried by any particular theory, you may be unable to avoid rejecting those facts that seem to be opposed to that theory, or do not fit in with it. **Work for yourself**—investigate independently; rely on your judgment in collecting information. That is, you should not make light of certain facts, simply because the partisans of any theory generally ignore them.

**What you reject** : *viz.* the facts which do not tally with the theory. **Adopt**—accept as useful. **It gives you** : *It* refers to seeing and thinking over all the facts bearing on a subject—even those that you afterwards reject. **Command**—mastery. **Comparative fearlessness** (*obj. of gives*) greater confidence. It makes you less liable to be taken aback or unawares by some new facts, than you would otherwise be ; or prepares you better to anticipate and meet the facts and arguments on the other side. **Rely on &c.**—take your facts at second hand. **Beforehand**—before the subject comes to be threshed out or discussed. **Worked out**—sifted to the bottom ; fully dealt with.

**Para 11. Comes the task**—then you have to determine what plan you should adopt, or what conclusion should be arrived at, on the subject. **Use method**—set about it systematically ; not think vaguely or at random. **Practise economy** : not exhaust your powers of thought by dwelling too long on the subject. This is explained below. **Just oscillating**—simply going to and fro in thought, *i.e.* hesitating long and anxiously—weighing the two opposite conclusions again and again—without making any progress (towards a satisfactory solution.) **As it were**—so to speak ; if we may use that expression. **Marking the little**—even noting the small progress. **Lose your attention**—allow yourself to remain absorbed. **Reveries**—loose thoughts, mere dreams (that serve no practical purpose). **Bring.....point**—set yourself to reach a definite result ; recall your attention to the practical aspect of the case. **No magic**—no mysterious, hidden efficacy, occult virtue. **Staggering about**—reeling ; being swayed this way and that—oscillating. **Methodize**—put into order. **Acquire a familiarity**—get to know familiarity (so as to lose almost all interest.) **Husk**—comparatively superficial and worthless aspects ; relatively disagreeable and unimportant parts. **Absolutely injurious** : Because (as explained below) the subject loses its freshness and charm of novelty, the mind becomes less alert &c. **Apprehension**—grasp of the subject ; or power of understanding. **Dull**—obtuse, or blunt ; less sharp. **Establish &c.**—form permanently some associations &c.—*i.e.* certain trains or series of thoughts in which one thought brings up a second, and so on, the mind going round and round through the same groove. **Occur again**—recur ; are suggested repeatedly. **Distract** : prevent you from fixing your thoughts to the real point. *Distract* means *lit.* draw in a wrong direction. **More tired** : It is well known that worry or constant distraction exhausts a man prematurely much sooner than sustained exercise of the mental powers, or even overwork.

**Para 12. Convey it**—communicate or impart it to others. **Be sure** : take care that you do not &c. **Immediately relevant**—directly pertaining to or bearing upon. (We are told below what should be avoided.) **Indulging in** : using too freely. This word is



plies that it is hard for many people to avoid bringing in maxims &c.—the temptation to make a display of one's eloquence in this way being too strong. **Maxims**—*lit.* the greatest or chief opinion (from *L. maxima sententia*) ; hence, wise sayings or observations. **Abstract propositions**—general truths; principles widely applicable. **Fill the whole**—exclude everything else ; be the only thing you speak about ; *i.e.* let every word you utter bear upon the subject in hand (to the exclusion of maxims or general reflections.) A man of business should not indulge in frothy or windy declamation ; his speech should be exactly to the point. **Human affairs**—concerns of human life—questions of politics or sociology. **Wide**—vast ; comprehensive. **Subtle**—delicate ; difficult to avoid error in. **Complicated**—intricate ; difficult to unravel. **Better content**—remain satisfied (in order to escape falling into error, or going beyond one's depths.) **Pronouncing**—passing judgment ; expressing his opinion confidently or authoritatively. The sentence means—It is prudent, even on the part of the wisest of men, to confine himself to those points on which he is required to express a decided opinion ; for if he ventures to indulge in general reflections on human affairs, he runs great risk of falling into error, or rousing unnecessary opposition, because the subject is so vast &c.

**Para 13.** **Nice**—delicate ; difficult to answer satisfactorily. **Motives for**—the considerations influencing you or leading you to decide as you do. **Much will** : The answer should be yes or no according to &c. **Just to others** : because they have a right to know, and it would imply that you have confidence in them, or regard them as rational beings able to appreciate your motives. **Eventually**—in the long run ; ultimately. **Must consider**—should not give out those few reasons before judging. **Mislead**—create a false impression ; lead others to exaggerate the importance of those motives (which perhaps had comparatively little influence on your decision.) **Tend to**—serve to bring out, or lead others to guess, all your motives. (It is of course only in the latter case, that it is right to state those few motives.) **For your own sake** : that you might not suffer in the estimation of the world. **Taken.....whole** : The danger in this case, is that you will be looked upon as either unreasonable or unscrupulous—especially if the few reasons stated are palpably weak or insufficient to justify the decision. **Hereafter**—on future occasions. **Precluded**—shut out ; forced to abstain. **Turns out**—is then found. **Sound**—cogent, unobjectionable. **Put forward**—urge ; bring before the world. [In this sentence the author states another objection to a partial justification of one's decision : If you state some few reasons only, you cannot afterwards state the really strong ones, when it may be very desirable for you to do so ; for if you do state them then, people will either suppose you are inventing them, or that you were insincere on the former occasion.]

**Para 14.** **Unfavourable**—adverse ; that goes against some

people, or upsets their plans ; amounting to a refusal. The author is evidently speaking of the decision of a minister. In fact the business he has in view all through this part of the book, is of a political kind. **Study**—take pains to determine ; carefully consider. **Ensure least discussion**—give occasion for as little further talk about it as possible. **Immediate ones**—such as readily suggest themselves (because it is always painful to have to refuse, and to see how the refusal hurts those concerned.) **Have their full weight**—exercise as much influence as they ought. **Obtain them**—attain those objects—*i.e.* to avoid giving unnecessary pain to disappointed suitors. **Implied falsehood**—what might amount to a lie, or serve to create a false impression ; *i.e.* what might encourage false hopes, or exhibit greater sympathy than you really feel. **Say the least**—express it as mildly as possible. ~~Evil is latent~~ : it will lead to mischief afterwards, however harmless it might appear at the time. **Latent**=concealed. **Each day's converse** : The older we are, or the longer we deal with men, the more strongly should we feel convinced of the truth, that in all such dealings it is best to be bold though not rude, in outspokenness. The author means it is no real kindness to encourage false expectations by suavity of manner, though we should not inflict unnecessary pain by harshness. **Bold but &c.**—an openness which does not shrink from telling the full truth, while it respects the feelings of others at the same time.

**Para 15. Respecting**—concerning. **Lucid**—clear. **Overburdened**—crammed full ; too much crowded. **Running through**—underlying ; pervading it within. **Visible upon** : the statement should be methodical in its very get up ; the method should be quite upon the surface, easily intelligible. **Form**—outward aspect. **Build it up**—gradually work it up. **Giving..... weight**—doing justice to every part of the subject. **Hurrying over**—dealing too summarily ; or omitting. **Enter into**—realise. **Forestalling**—anticipating ; reaching too soon (so as to keep others in the dark as to how you arrive at the conclusions.) The author means you should take care not to proceed too fast, but carry your hearers easily along with you—enable them to follow you. **Seem to forget**—*i. e.* do not seek to exhibit their mastery of the subject ; they can place themselves in the situation of beginners—who appear to understand how difficult the subject must be to those who have not given previous attention to it. **Work out results**—deduce conclusions from facts. **Anxious**—perfectly familiar and obvious truths ; truisms. **Footsteps &c.**—a rate of advance not greater than is convenient for a beginner. [The sentence means—Those who know how to teach efficiently, are able to keep their knowledge in the background, and suit their pace to one who studies the fact for the first time ; they show clearly every step in the chain of reasoning, and explain even those truths which are perfectly self-evident to them.]



**Para 16. Draw up**—write out. **On record**—in writing. **Abstract**—summary. **Master of**—thoroughly familiar with. **Of course.....grounded**—you will readily understand that if while announcing your decision, you could not state all your reasons for it, it is very desirable to keep a record of those reasons; on the contrary if you did give out all your reasons then, the practice is not so very necessary. **Reserved**—partial; some of the reasons being suppressed, or kept back. See para 13. **It was grounded**—the decision was based.

**Para 17. Done upon**: what action was taken, or what reply was given. **Put away**—filed; stowed away. **Documents**—important papers (originally=a lesson or proof, from *L. doceo* to teach.) **Yet not require**: The system should not however be so cumbrous or complicated as to take up more time &c. than can be conveniently given day after day. **Facsimiles**—exact copies.

**Para 18. So they are**: These matters are indeed trifling, but they cannot be safely neglected; if they are not attended to, great inconvenience and mischief would result.

## ESSAY III.

### ON THE CHOICE AND MANAGEMENT OF AGENTS. J.

**Substance** of the paragraphs :

1. It is worth while taking great pains in choosing an agent as you have to suffer for any shortcomings of his.

2. It is far more important to have some opportunity of observing his previous conduct in a similar situation, than a knowledge of his general abilities.

3. Our previous knowledge of a man is often unreliable as a means of judging how he would act under different circumstances.

4. The most reliable and painstaking agents are men possessed of a strong sense of responsibility.

5. In managing one's agents, (*a*) they should be allowed to comment freely on the orders they receive.

6. And (*b*) They should not be interfered with too much, lest they lose the power of acting on their own responsibility.

7. (*c*) They should be treated with as much confidence as is reasonable, and not be blamed for every slight departure from your orders.

8. (*d*) Appreciation and praise should be judiciously awarded.

**Agents** are persons who transact business on behalf of another or are employed to carry out another's instructions.

**Para 1. Well repaid**—amply rewarded. **To whom.....**  
**whipping-boy**—whose misdeeds will be visited on you; for whom

you will have to undergo vicarious punishment. The reference is to the practice in the Middle Ages, of retaining boys in service, whose duty it was to undergo whipping, when such penance was prescribed for their masters—usually kings. The Church in those days enforced discipline even on the highest in the land, who had to confess their sins to the priests and submit to various penances (fasts, scourging, wearing sack-cloth &c. in order to obtain absolution from those sins.

**Para 2. Make a catalogue**—draw up a list *i. e.* find out from a man's certificates, whether he is diligent, painstaking, intelligent, and so forth. **Office**—duty, kind of work. **In the absence** : when you have no opportunity of testing a man's qualifications more strictly, perhaps the best thing to do is to ascertain whether he possesses the required qualifications. **Untoward**—unlucky ; unfortunate. As an instance of such "combination," suppose a man possesses both caution and industry—qualities desirable for the work he has to perform,—but that his caution makes him too slow in spite of the great pains he takes.

**Para 3. Mislead us**—lead our judgment astray. **As we think** : It is implied that such difference may be material, though we fancy it to be slight. For instance a man who is managing his own affairs very ably, may be utterly unfit to manage another man's concerns ; or one, who readily mastered one subject, may prove unable to acquire a full knowledge of another. And this is true also of the moral qualities, as explained below. **In conversation** : *i. e.* who uses strong language, is impatient of contradiction or resents any criticism and even difference of opinion. **Does not confirm**—shows that this is not always the case ; fails to prove this. **Intemperate**—rash, reckless ; fond of strong language.

**Para 4. Have...responsibility**—realise or feel that they are answerable for the manner in which their work is performed ; are very anxious to discharge their duties as well as possible. **Under this feeling**—when a man is influenced by a lively sense of duty. **Grudge no pains**—spare himself no trouble ; cheerfully undergo any amount of labour. **Minute things**—every detail. **And what is .....does so**—Besides, such a man will never (in order to appear smart or intelligent) say that he understands any instructions, until he does actually understand them ; he will not mind if he is thought dull in consequence ; and this is a very important qualification for an agent (for those agents who pretend to understand orders before they do so, to show their sharpness, are of course sure to execute the orders very ill—to make a mess of the business entrusted to them.)

**Para 5. Such a manner** *i. e.* a gracious, winning manner—not cold, haughty, or stiff. **Comment freely**—criticise openly or without any hesitation. **Intrusted**—charged ; *entrusted* is perhaps the more ordinary spelling. **See things** *i. e.* obstacles, or objections.

**Para 6. Leaning**—relying ; referring to. That is, they are unable to act according to their own discretion, even in trifles (for fear of your displeasure.) [The author might have mentioned another evil—that when the superior is fond of interfering, his subordinates lose much of their interest in the work, and become mere machines.] **Scott**—(1771-1832)—the great novelist and poet. **Canning** : George Canning (1770-1827) the great orator and statesman, who rose to be Prime Minister of England a few months before his death. He was the father of Earl Canning, the first Viceroy of India. **Be content to use &c.**—Remain satisfied with employing other men not only to execute much of the work, but even to superintend the execution, and obtain information ; rely on the assistance of others in &c. **Implements**—instruments ; agents. **Vigorous**—strong, energetic. **Nice**—delicate ; *i. e.* men who have clear insight into business (and see much further than their subordinates are likely to do.) **Do without him**—be able to manage the business well in his absence. **Create a standard**—set up a model or high ideal, which the subordinates should endeavour to come up to ; to accustom his agents to reach a high level of thoroughness in their work. **Maintained**—kept up ; not departed from. **Even when** : Because it is not possible for one man to examine every thing with his own eyes.

**Para 7. Represent you**—stand in your place ; act for you in negotiations &c. **Your inclination** : That is, you should lean on the side of confidence—should never suspect or distrust them except upon plain evidence. **Hearty**—strong ; cordial. [ On this subject, Helps has the following observations in *Ellesmere's* brilliant essay on the *Arts of Self-Advancement* : “ In one respect, I think, they (the agents) may be trusted largely. That is, as to their fidelity. There is much less mischief done by faithlessness in agents than is generally supposed. But you cannot overrate too much the chances of their neglecting to do what you have told them. You must follow up, through all its stages, any business that you wish to be sure of succeeding. Constant and tiresome enquiries must be made, as to whether the thing is done that you have ordered to be done.” And then follows a good extract from Sir Charles Napier : “How entirely all things depend upon the mode of executing them, and how ridiculous mere theories are ! My successor thought, as half the world always thinks that a man in command has only to order, and obedience will follow. Hence they are baffled, not from want of talent, but from inactivity, vainly thinking that while they spare themselves, every one under them will work like horses.”] **In justice**—to treat them fairly ; to give them fair play. **Own sake** : that you may not suffer through hesitation or want of interest in your agents. **The limits.....precise**—you should accurately define the limits

beyond which they are not to go (without further instructions from you.) The rules you prescribe should make it quite clear to them how far you leave the matter to their judgment. **Within** : so long as they do not step beyond &c., or do not exceed your instructions. **Large.....power**—ample power of acting as appears best in their judgment. **Departing from**—not adhering strictly to. **Discrepancy**—difference between your plan and his execution. [The sentence means—Even when two men have the same end in view and are agreed about the means to attain it, they are often found to differ in matters of detail in their plans ; you should not therefore seriously notice any such slight departures from your orders on the part of a subordinates.] **Been prepared for**—expected to find ; *i. e.* you should not be surprised by &c. **Captiousness**—readiness to find fault with another. **Great burden**: make things difficult for him, embarrass him greatly (explained below.) **Intent upon**—solicitous about ; most careful or anxious to secure. **Thenceforward**—ever after from that time. **After your fancy**—according to your liking or humour ; as you prefer. **Fancy**—implies that your notions may not be sound, but capricious and fanciful. **Embarrass**—perplex, hamper ; make it difficult for him to act with decision and judgment. **Indecisive**—hesitating ; irresolute. **Lead to**—end in ; cause.

**Para 8. Are appreciated**—receive hearty recognition ; are thought highly of. **With nicety**—delicately ; with scrupulous care—*i. e.* when nothing admirable in their service escapes notice and praise. **Careful.....promotion &c.**—scrupulously just in raising your subordinates to higher position, increasing their salary &c. You should not overlook the claims of the deserving, or be influenced by outside pressure, personal likings &c. **Beware of**—carefully avoid. **Slight**—seems to mean *slighting* or disparaging—*i. e.* unfavourable. **Haphazard**—random, hasty. **Proceedings**—the manner in which they perform their work. [The author implies that subordinates often take to heart such cutting remarks (especially if they are unjust) even more than injustice in awarding promotions etc. ) and in order to secure efficiency and good will on their part, it is necessary not only to create no grievance—by partiality, or indifference to merit,—but to abstain from indulging in sharp sayings or reflections on the conduct of one's servants.] **Right...substance**—correct in its general purport ; *i. e.* given to those who really deserve it. **Put...foundation**—should be based on what is most worthy of praise ; should recognise those qualities which ought to be most admired. (This is explained below.) **Point to**—be directed to ; recognise. **Strenuous**—energetic and painstaking ; unwearied. **Judicious**—wisely directed or applied ; not wasted upon what is unimportant or requires to be undone afterwards. **Exertion** : It is implied that it is industry and industry of this kind—that deserves praise in an *agent*, rather than



mere cleverness, or success due to good luck. **Passed by unnoticed**—been overlooked ; escaped recognition.

The following extracts from Sir Henry Taylor's *Autobiography* will serve to illustrate some of the observations in the present essay. Sir Henry Taylor (then one of the junior secretaries in the Foreign office) got James Spedding a fellow student of his at Cambridge, appointed in his office on a salary of £150 a year, in 1835. Spedding was regarded, he says, "on all hands, not only as a man of first rate capacity, but as having quite a genius for business. For six years Spedding worked away with universal approbation, and all this time he would have been willing to accept a post of precis-writer with £300 a year, or any other such recognised position, and attach himself permanently to the office. But no such was placed at his disposal. Stephen had once said to me, when advising me to depend upon the public and upon literature for advancement, and not upon the Government : *you may write off the first joint of your fingers for them, and then you may write off the second joint, and all that they will say of you is 'what a remarkably short fingered man!'*..... They did not say this of Spedding, but they did nothing for him, and he took the opportunity of the Whig Government going out in 1841 to give up his employment. He then applied himself to edit the works and vindicate the fame of Lord Bacon. In 1847, on Sir James Stephen's retirement, the office of Under Secretary of State with £2000 a year was offered to him, but he could not be induced to accept it. He could not be brought to believe, what no one else doubted, that he was equal to the duties..... The fact that the man, being well known and close at hand for six years, who could have been had for £300 a year in 1841, should have been let slip, though he was thought worth £2000 a year in 1847—is a clear example of the little heed given by the Government of this country to the choice and use of instruments." *Autobiography of Henry Taylor*, vol. I. pp. 234—6. Spedding's great work—*The Letters and Life of Bacon*,—to which he devoted the best years of his own life, is among the grandest works of its kind.

## ESSAY IV.

### ON THE TREATMENT OF SUITORS.

**Substance** of the paragraphs :

1. It is not courtesy so much as explicitness and truth, that constitutes true kindness to suitors.
2. It is dangerous to encourage expectations in a suitor which you cannot fulfil,—large hopes being often built on very slight foundations.

3. Be on your guard also against wilful misinterpretation of your words.

4. It is often best to give a written refusal, couched in as unambiguous language as possible, and avoiding even courteous expressions of regret.

5. When it is necessary to see a suitor, do not give evasive replies, avoid a promising manner, and follow up the interview by a written answer. ~~It~~ is a weakness to shrink from hurting one by a distinct refusal.

6. Unless the reasons for your refusal can be explained in full, it is better to keep them back.

7. And it is best to give no reasons at all for refusal where the suit is an impudent one, and when your special reasons, if stated, would humiliate the suitor, and if withheld, might lay you open to the charge of partiality.

8. To give any reason at all is to prepare the way for a future request.

9. Do not exhibit disgust at the selfish importunity of suitors, for to them the affair is of absorbing importance, though it may be mere matter of business to you.

**Suitors** are men who have some favour to ask.

**Para 1. Pars:** To refuse a suit kindly, is to grant it in part; *i.e.* if you treat a suitor kindly while refusing to grant his request, it is as though you partially granted it; for he is thankful for such treatment, and does not then feel his disappointment half so much. The words are from one of the orations of Cicero, the great Roman orator and statesman. **Misinterpreted**—misconstrued; taken in a wrong sense. **Construe**—render; translate. They correctly use the word *kindly* to explain the Latin word *habe*. **But they.....truth**—Their mistake lies in supposing that the kindness meant in the passage is mere politeness—using smooth words and exhibiting a gracious manner; because it is a greater kindness to a suitor to tell him clearly and frankly that there is no hope (for a gracious manner may have the mischievous effort of keeping his expectations alive, and of preparing more bitter disappointment for him in the future.) [The author might have noticed another element which might enter into kindness to suitors—*viz* promptness; for it is the usual delay in getting one's suit considered and replied to, that is most trying to a suitor.] **Explicitness**—plain straightforward dealing; absence of shuffling or evasion.

**Para 2. Be loth**—be unwilling; try your best to avoid. **Putting in a course**: doing anything to further; helping forward. **Above rules**—acting in defiance of rules; ready to do the most absurd thing imaginable. **In reverse**—contrary to the usual method; upside down. **Pyramid &c.**—a huge superstructure based upon a point. The author means that Ilope is like a builder of supernatural powers, able to erect a top-heavy pyramid with the



point on the ground,—to build impossible castles in the air : because under the influence of hope, men are ready to raise grand expectations on the slenderest basis ; they construe commonplace words of politeness—a pitying look, a gracious manner &c.—into grounds for expecting future success. (So that, as the author repeatedly points out in this essay, it is dangerous, and even unkind, to try to soothe disappointed suitors by exhibiting sympathy or extra politeness.) **Wildness**—extravagance ; *i.e.* absurdly high expectations. **Astounds**—amazes ; takes your breath away. **Fisherman** : The story (one of the earliest in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*) is that a fisherman happened to bring up a bottle from the sea, out of which, when opened, a little smoke rose into the air, and gradually assumed the shape of a huge genie who offered the fisherman a choice between three forms of death. The *genie* here stands for the monstrous expectations formed by suitors, and the “small vessel” represents the slight ground they often have for these expectations. **Well wonder**—have good reason to feel surprised (for you had no idea of encouraging such hopes when you threw a few words of sympathy, or a little extra touch of politeness into your manner, while refusing a suit.) **Persuading** : The reference is to the clever trick played upon the genie by the fisherman, when, failing to work upon the genie's feelings of gratitude and mercy, he pretended to disbelieve the possibility of the genie having emerged from a small bottle ; and the foolish genie reduced himself again into the form of smoke and entered the bottle ; whereupon the astute fisherman at once corked it up and threatened to throw it again into the sea. **Ensconce**—betake ; hide ; snugly shelter or retire within. The word suggests the idea of entering a small room. **Such a feat** : the wonderful act of confining himself within so small a compass. [Stripped of figure, the sentence means—But you will hardly be able to induce the suitor to go back to the grounds of his hope, to explain how little any words of yours could justly inspire him with the hope that he now entertains ; that is, you will fail to undo or remove the expectations which your words or manner may have raised in the suitor's mind.]

**Para 3.** After having spoken of unintentional misinterpretation, the author proceeds to point out the danger of wilful or dishonest misrepresentation. **In addition.....mean**—Besides the false hopes which a suitor often honestly entertains, you should be on your guard against those cunning suitors who put a larger construction on your words, *i.e.* construe them in a sense more favourable than such words are well-known to bear. The author means that if you use no more than certain current words of courteous refusal, these dishonest suitors artfully pretend to take them literally, construing them into vague promises—though they are mere polite nothings, generally understood to be such.

**Para 4. A deafness** : Applicants for favour have a peculiar

trick of failing to catch words of refusal ; that is, they often pretend not to hear or understand you when you refuse, (especially if the refusal is in veiled terms of politeness) but go on urging their suit. **Simple terms**—plain, unmistakable language. **Not likely** : might be misunderstood by those unfamiliar with them. The current phrases of polite refusal are meant—especially the conventional ones in official use, as explained below. **Forms**—formulae, as it were ; set phrases—*e. g.* “I am verry sorry” &c. **Wilful**—intentional. They think that they have been deliberately imposed upon. **In general**—as a rule. **Put.....construction upon**—give the widest or the most favourable meaning to ; construe into promises as far as possible. **Made to**—tortured into. The phrase expresses the idea of attaching forced or unnatural meaning to the terms or expressions.

**Para 5. It will often** : In many cases you will not be able to avoid an interview—a written refusal will not do. In such cases, you should not forget that there is an additional danger : not only is there then the danger of the suitor being deceived by hope into fancying he has some chance, or of his wilfully misunderstanding your words ; but there is the danger of his conveniently forgetting what precisely your reply was. That is, he will probably fail to remember that your answer was so very unfavourable to him, or will pretend that your decision was not final, so far as he understood &c. **Contend against**—try to escape the danger of, be on your guard against. **But also** : The complete sentence is.—But you have also the imperfection &c. to contend against. **If possible** : To guard against this danger, do not think the matter over, when you have seen the suitor, and told him of your decision. **Termination of**—the last thing done in. (What should be done after the interview is told below.) **Lead to**—be followed by. **Something in writing**—a written reply—or a memorandum which might serve as a document for future reference. **Recording**—setting down in writing. **Wished to express**—the precise answer which you intended to give. **Avoid.....manner**—Do not use a sympathetic or encouraging tone—nor behave so as to give rise to false hopes. **Apt to find** : ready to take such manner to be equivalent to promises ; disposed to build false hopes on the graciousness of your manner—just as if you had said something to encourage such hopes. **Resort**—have recourse to. **Evasive**—vague ; meant to avoid giving a definite reply either way. **Bringing.....close**—inducing the suitor to take his departure. The evasive answers are of the following kind : “I shall try if I can do anything for you”—“I am unable” now to say how far you will succeed, but I shall ask so and so”—“you may be sure I shall do what is possible, but I cannot give you much hope” &c. &c.—These being polite words with which men, who do not like to inflict pain by a refusal, try to dismiss suitors, and which these latter often take advantage of. **Shrink from**—avoid, as

something painful. **Distinct**—clear, positive. **Merely because &c.**—out of a false delicacy—mere *chakshulajja* ( to use a Bengali word for which there is no exact English equivalent.) The sentence means—when a request cannot be granted, you should not be deterred from conveying a downright refusal ; for it is a weakness to be influenced by the fear of seeing how the person to whom you are speaking is hurt by such a refusal. It is neither just, nor an act of true kindness, as the author has already said, to avoid giving a plain answer. **Let not...sensitivity**—While you are proof against bribery and no undue influence of a corrupt kind can prevail upon you to depart ever so slightly from strict justice, you should take care not to allow yourself to be led astray by your feelings—by trying to avoid hurting one who is before you. [The author means—It is of little use for you to be strictly honest, if the delicacy of your feelings should lead you to depart from the path of strict justice or duty ; that it is a culpable weakness to be *facile*, or too easy-going in such matters. Compare what Bacon says of *facility* in his essay on *Great Place* : “ As for facility, it is worse than bribery. For bribes come but now and then ; but if importunity or idle respects lead a man, he shall never be without. As Salomon saith—To respect persons is not good ; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread ” (*i. e.* for the sake of one who occasionally entertains him at table.))

**Para 6. To determine** : It is by no means easy to decide under what circumstances it is prudent to assign your reasons for not granting a suit. **It must depend** : It is best to communicate or withhold your reasons, according as you are prepared to give out the whole truth, or only a part of it. That is, it is only if you are at liberty to give out all (or nearly all) the grounds of your decision that it is advisable to assign any reasons ; otherwise, the safest as well as the least offensive course is to be silent on the subject altogether. **General principle**—rule for guidance applicable to all kinds of business. See essay *On the Transaction of Business*, para 4. **Abide by**—adhere to. **Naturally**—of course. **Somewhat ...explanation**—a rather elaborate statement of reasons—omitting no points however minute. **Showing respect** : Because in giving detailed reasons, you show that you are anxious not to offend or disoblige the suitor ; it is in fact a sort of apology for your inability to grant the suit—either wholly or partially. **But if.....other way**—It is, however, so very objectionable to enter into an explanation, where you are forced to withhold part (and perhaps the strongest part) of your reasons, that it is in such cases much better to exhibit respect in a different way (*e. g.* by accompanying the suitor politely to the door, bowing gracefully to him, paying him suitable compliments, &c.)

**Para 7. Mere project &c.**—a piece of unwarrantable impudence : a proposal manifestly absurd dictated by audacity or impertinence on the suitor's part. **Prudent** : For the reason

given below ; and also perhaps because such bold, shameless applicants are generally unscrupulous, and likely to misrepresent any motives you profess, and to take advantage of any candour on your part. **Entering upon**—undertaking to state ; going into. **Addressed to**—when you talk face to face with. (It is of course a rude thing to tell a man that it is a piece of impudence on his part to make the request ; for a gentleman it is very painful to have to behave so rudely. It is of suits for appointments that the author is here thinking.) **Special reasons**—reasons applicable to himself in particular. The author means of course the reasons which make the request an impudent one on the part of the suitor. **Mortify**—bitterly wound ; be a severe blow to. **Self love**—almost equiv. to *vanity* ; “to mortify one’s self-love” is to humiliate him painfully, ‘to take him down a peg or two’—to use a colloquial phrase. **And so : i. e.** by omitting such special reasons—by failing to make it clear that your main objection is to that particular suitor. **Lay yourself open**—make yourself liable. **Unfairness**—Partiality. **Who came &c.**—who was quite as much open ; who was as objectionable on the general grounds you stated, as he is. The sentence means—If you give only general reasons for refusal the person whose suit you refuse may appear to be right in calling you unjust or partial when you grant the same suit to another against whom the same reasons apply. (It is implied that you are not really guilty of unfairness, for you rejected the first applicant as one peculiarly unworthy of the favour—though you could not pain him by saying so.) **Simply to refuse**—to refuse without giving any reasons at all. **Couch**—express ; word. **Impregnable generalities**—vague general terms which are not open to attack—which are too indefinite to offer a handle to, or furnish grounds for, any accusation or objection. *Impregnable* means unassailable, and is used of fortresses. [This last advice sounds rather crafty or sly, and is hardly in keeping with the lofty tone the essays breathe all through.]

**Para 8. Lay some foundation**—furnish some grounds ; leave an opening. Because it is naturally taken for granted, that if the circumstances be such or the suit be so modified, as to make your reasons no longer applicable, you will not fail to grant the request. This shows the inexpediency of stating reasons, when all the reasons, or the strongest of them, cannot be divulged.

**Para 9. Constantly to deal** : Men who occupy high responsible positions and are therefore always being solicited for various favours. **Giving way to**—being swayed by ; indulging in. Because so much of the precious time of such busy men is taken up in interviewing and answering suitors, that their tempers are soured. **Intrusion**—coming in unseasonably ; invasion of their leisure and privacy. **Importunity**—persistency (in soliciting again and again for favours &c.) ; urgent and repeated solicitations. **Egotism**—ab-



sorption in their own thoughts or interests ; want of thought for others. Suitors, as we are told below, have their minds often so wholly taken up with their suits, that they fail to understand how tiresome they are to the busy men they go to, and how hopelessly unreasonable their suit sometimes is. The author says a word, however, in defence of enthusiastic suitors, and advises men of business to be less impatient of them. **As an antidote**—as a preventive against such disgust ; to prevent one from being too impatient or abrupt in dealing with importunate suitors. **Matter of business**—a subject about which they (men of business) are indifferent, except as a piece of work they have to get through. **From its hopelessness**—because it is out of the question to grant the suit (though the suitor does not know this—his enthusiasm leading him to hope against hope, to shut his eyes to the practical aspect of the case.) *From* has the force of *on account of*. **Absorbing**—all-engrossing ; occupying his thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. [The sentence means—you will not be led to feel such disgust, if you reflect that the affair is one which the suitor has so deeply at heart, that he cannot for the time think of aught else ; though to you it is simply an ordinary item of business, and may even be a matter of indifference because you perceive clearly that the suit cannot be successful.] **Should expect** : And those (statesmen &c ) who have to answer such applications, should not be surprised if they find an applicant expect too much, or entertain foolish hopes ; for a man in distress, like one suffering from bodily illness, is often unreasonable and incapable of thinking except about his own case. [The above is another instance of the author's kindness of heart, and that exercise of imagination on "errands of charity," which he is so fond of inculcating.]

## ESSAY V.

### INTERVIEWS.

#### Substance of the paragraphs :

1. Interviews are often very desirable, because the real thoughts of men may be gathered (a) from words which escape them, (b) from looks tones and gesture. But for the same reasons interviews are hazardous also, and require great discretion.
2. (A) Interviews are *useful*, (i) as enabling each party to ascertain the kinds of opposition which must be expected, and thus preparing the way for compromise.
3. (ii) When it is desirable that the other side should hear your objections and arguments, before pledging themselves to a certain

course. There is the danger, however, of a man growing more obstinate as he goes on arguing, but does not wait to hear all you have to say.)

4. (iii) When the affair is complicated by the individual peculiarities, inclination &c. of the other side—a knowledge of which, acquired in an interview, would assist you in coming to a decision.

5. (iv) To encourage the timid and the hesitating, and to advance the matter up to a certain point.

6. An interview is sometimes *unavoidable*, because the other side, trusting in their power to talk you over, insist upon it, and have to be humoured.

7. (B) Interviews are *undesirable*, (i) when your strongest reasons cannot be communicated.

8. (ii) When you have to deal with eager, sanguine men, who, if you are wanting in firmness and readiness, either take your silence through delicacy to imply consent, or entrap you into pledging yourself to what you do not really approve.

9. (iii) When you may be compromised by indiscreet allies who are with you, but whom you have not fully consulted or instructed beforehand, and cannot do so then and there.

10. (C) *Men who are inclined to resort to interviews* : (a) Those who are too irresolute to profit by them, but wish to avoid pledging themselves to anything. In an interview such men are either entrapped by their own words, or embarrassed by the earnestness of others.

11. (b) Indolent persons, who wish to avoid the trouble of thinking steadily and of expressing themselves precisely, and for whom interviews are unsafe, unless indeed they come only to learn, and not to judge or to support their own views.

12. (D) *Qualifications* necessary to conduct an interview with success : (a) information, (b) force of character, (c) ability to understand and readiness in dealing with, any new proposal.

13. (E) *Concluding advice* : (a) When you are in a responsible position (e. g. that of a minister) the other side having little to lose) has considerable advantage in the interview, being at liberty to say anything, while your words are liable to be misinterpreted. In such a case say as little as possible, bring forward only the strongest arguments one at a time, instead of making a set speech.

14. (b) It will be well to have somebody on your side in the interview, (i) so as to give you greater boldness (ii) aid you in replying, (iii) to be a witness to what you say, and (iv) enable you to ascertain the impression produced by your words upon another.

15. (c) You should keep a record of the results of the interview — i) as that would guard against misrepresentation, and (ii) cause people to come prepared and speak with precision.

**Para 1. Whom...command**—who are not bound to obey you. **Pen**—writing. **Surer**—more reliable. [Because one can



(and often does) express himself more clearly and unmistakeably in writing, and he who receives written communication is better able to understand exactly what is meant—for he can take as much time, and give as much thought, to a letter as he chooses.] **Nicer**—more delicate. When speaking, one can watch the effect of his words, and thus make out how much should be said, whether it is better to be firm or conciliatory, &c. &c. [On this subject, the American writer O. W. Holmes has the following fine observations: “Spoken language is so plastic, you can pat and coax and shave and rub out and fill up &c. when you work with that soft material..... Writing or printing is like shooting with a rifle; you may hit your reader’s mind or miss it. But talking is like playing at a mark with the pipe of an engine, if it is within reach, and you have time enough, you cannot help hitting it.”—*Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*.] **Is uppermost**—what they have most at heart. **Peculiar interest**—unique importance. **Verbal**—oral; by word of mouth. **Form.....own**—are quite as expressive as the words themselves. The author means that you may often gather quite as much of a man’s real sentiments &c. from his looks and tones, as from the words he utters. For he may be guarded in his words, but may betray himself to a penetrating eye. **Hazardous**—risky. For it is a game at which two may play; your opponent may be more clever in turning an interview to use than you are. **Pas-time**—least serious part; as good as play. **Than as a part**: The author implies that on the contrary, it requires great caution to be able to manage an interview.

**Para 2. Bring together**—cause to meet. **Conflicting**—mutually opposed; not to be reconciled to each other. **Interests**—men or parties, each of them having interests or purposes different from those of others. **Amount and variety**—how much and what kinds. **Worn**—forced by mutual friction, as it were. The different parties perceive that it is hopeless to come to an understanding, or to avert ruin without compromise; and so an interview forces people to be more moderate in their views. **To effect this**—to make people realise the folly of sticking to extreme opinions.

**Para 3. Pledging.....upon**—committing himself to; taking up an attitude from which he cannot retreat (for fear of seeming inconsistent, timid, or weak.) When a man once states in writing that he will not do such and such a thing, before hearing your arguments, he may not be able to change his decision, even if the arguments really tell on him. **Explanation**—clearing up. There are difficult matters on which it is very natural for a man to be misled by outward circumstances into forming conclusions altogether erroneous. **Good rejoinder**—a very satisfactory (or unanswerable) reply to his objection. **Commits himself**—takes a final step—a step from which there is no retreat. **In cases.....to say**: Here the author admits that there is danger in the other course also—in

resorting to an interview ; the danger is that a man may, before hearing all your arguments, grow more obstinate in his opposition, as he talks on the subject ; for it is well known that the mere effort to prove himself in the right often strengthens a man's opinions, and that many persons are too proud to confess themselves conquered by any arguments, however strong. **Talking.....obstinacy**—getting more and more hardened or confirmed in his own opinions by talking about it. *Into* has the force of 'so as to fall into'.

**Para 4. If you did not know :** Of course a decision formed in ignorance of the real inclination of the other parties, is sure to be mischievous in the long run. And however convenient a speedy decision may be, it should be avoided under such circumstances. The difficulty should be faced and conquered if possible by personal interview and direct persuasion, and not lazily ignored. **Thing or question**—matter in hand. **Much influenced**—affected to a great extent. The author considers the cases in which the opinion or decision of the other party depends on the personal characteristics of the men, their whims, eccentricities, the fact of their belonging to a particular clique &c.—and not on a common sense view of the matter (such as would weigh with most men.) **And you require :** And therefore, you would be led to a wrong decision, unless you fathom the characters of those you deal with. **Now this :** So far from such cases being rare, in a great majority of cases it is very desirable to acquire a knowledge of the individual characteristics of those you deal with. The author implies that human nature is so diverse and complicated, that it is hardly ever safe to assume that men (of whom you know nothing ) will act in a particular way or that they hold certain opinions,—that, for instance they will take the course obviously to their own interest.

**Para 5.** This para serves to illustrate the preceding, and enumerates some of the cases in which the personal peculiarities of those concerned make an interview desirable. **Timid :** There are men who perceive that a certain course is the best, but cannot pluck courage to adopt it. If re-assured and inspired with hope by one of a stronger nature, they may, however, do so. **Settle**—cause to arrive at a decision. **Bring on &c.**—help to push the matter clearly forward towards settlement ; show a well-marked or distinct progress.

**Para 6. On their own account**—for reasons connected with the interviews themselves ; because in those cases interviews are desirable in themselves. **Not be satisfied :** insist upon interviews ; fancy themselves illtreated if an interview be not granted. **Verbal evidence**—proof from the words (*i. e.* replies) of the persons to whom the arguments are addressed. **Opportunity**—*viz.* an interview. **Remove this delusion**—cure them of this wrong belief ; show them that their arguments are not irresistible to the listener.

**Para 7. Determine**—decide ; cause to arrive at a solution

or decision. **Accede**—assent ; yield to the request for. **Tempted**: Because it seems so harsh and rude to give a blank refusal. **Not being** : As the reasons you state are not the ones which really move you to a decision (for the latter, it has been said, you are not in a position to give). **Admit of**—be open to. **Fair answer**—apparently cogent or unanswerable reply. **Shuffling**—equivocation ; attempt to evade the point at issue (*i. e.* after pretending to state your reasons.) **Resort to**—put in. **Mere wilfulness**—an obstinate adherence to your own views ; sticking to your opinion in spite of the fatal objections urged against it. The sentence means—If you grant an interview, and try to explain your decision under the circumstances, you will in the presence of able antagonists, be forced to maintain an attitude of unreasoning obstinacy, for they will make short work of your pretended reasons, drive you into a corner, till you can do nothing better than just stick to your decision, in spite of all they say.

**Para 8.** **Averse**—unwilling. **Eager**—enthusiastic ; ardent. **Sanguine**—hopeful ; men who “do not know when they are beaten” as the saying is (but go on hoping to be able to bring you round.) **Force**—decision of character ; firmness. **Readiness**—power of replying to arguments &c. on the spur of the moment. **For it**—to be able to hold your own against such opponents face to face. **Do not understand**—cannot believe (that you really disagree with them.) **Very manifest**—quite clear or unmistakable, *i. e.* unless you use clear strong words of disapproval, or a violent manner. **Prepossessed**—convinced beforehand ; their minds are so completely occupied by the opinions they entertain, that they cannot believe you would persist in disagreeing with them. **Perhaps you feel** : It is natural that you should feel &c. **Delicacy**—dislike to hurt their feelings. **Undeceiving**—correcting their error ; removing their illusion. **Passed by**—is allowed (through delicacy) to slip. That is, they go away with the impression that you are not really opposed to their plans. **Quote**—refer to ; cite. **Authority**—one whose opinion has weight (and is favourable to them.) **Folly**—foolish or impracticable proposals. **Or it ends** : Another possible result of an interview with such persons, if you are weak, may be that you leave the meeting committed to a series of steps which are really opposed to your good sense and judgment. **Anything but**—quite different or contrary to (what you think the right course.)

**Para 9.** **Less.....after**—more undesirable. **In connection with**—having as your allies. **Supposed.....sentiments**—generally thought to utter precisely the same views as yours. **Previous communication**—opportunity of consulting beforehand ; *i. e.* with whom you have not discussed the matter already, nor brought their views into harmony with yours. **Cannot rely** : you discover them (when too late) to be wanting in discretion. **In such a.c**

when you are placed in the awkward position of having indiscreet allies. **Compromised**—injured (by being) placed in a false position. **Indiscretion**—want of prudence or sound judgment. [In the sentences that follows, it is explained that the position is an awkward one, from which you cannot extricate yourself then.] **Disown**—disavow; openly give out that their views and yours are different. [To do so would of course be to appear weak and ridiculous to the opposite party, and might give the latter some advantage too.] **Odium**—unpopularity; blame (in the eyes of the public.) The author evidently takes the case of a minister, or a public man at all events; supposing the proposal he has to reject is a popular one, he would naturally dislike the idea of taking the responsibility of rejecting it solely upon himself. **Recall**—revoke; unsay. **Their consequences**—how the words compromise you, or weaken your cause (and his). **These are things**: These consequences are such that it would be ridiculous and even mischievous to speak of in the presence of the opposite party.

**Para 10. Profit least**—are unable to turn an interview to advantage. This curious fact—that interviews are most readily undertaken by those who are least able to make good use of them—is explained below. **Irresolute**—wavering; unable to decide promptly. **Who wish &c.**—This explains *irresolute*. **Pledging themselves**—promising to do anything definite—to take any particular steps. **Safest**: Because in a letter they feel they must give a definite reply, and what they state in a letter will stand in black and white, while they fancy that they will be able to put off the other party by vague words. **Occurs**—suggests itself. **Looks like progress**: Moreover, when they arrange an interview, they flatter themselves (and show others) that they are making a distinct advance—that they are pushing the matter forward at least one stage. **As they say**—that being the expression they love to use (7/2 that they see their way.) **See their way**—make out what course they should adopt; understand what should be done next. **Entangled**—caught as in a mesh or snare; *i. e.* they say something rather incautiously, and this is instantly taken advantage of by their astute opponents. **Oppressed**—pressed hard; put out or confounded; unable to resist successfully. **Earnest opinions**: They are not themselves very earnest, but rather inclined at first to make light of the matter; but they find that the other side is intensely serious. **Conduct**—manage. **Manner they intend**—*i. e.* in a cautious or off-hand way, giving no promises, while getting at the views of the other side &c. **At command**—readily available. **Miserly**—cautious or careful to the point of meanness; taking into account every petty detail. **Weighing**—balancing; pondering over. [The sentence means—Such man cannot carry an interview to a successful issue—gaining their own point, and yielding or promising nothing; because to do so, one must have



courage and power of deciding promptly ; on the contrary, such men can only come to a decision after dwelling long on the possible results of every course, and balancing them with the timid caution of a miser.]

**Para 11. Indolent** : laziness of the mind rather than the body is here meant—inability to think long and steadily. **Steadily**—closely and perseveringly. **Which they** : *which* refers to *thinking steadily* and *expressing* &c. **Called upon**—under the necessity (of doing) ; unable to avoid **Take.....position**—play the part. **Judge** : that is, if they have to listen to the representations of rival parties, and decide between them. **Indulge in**—giving themselves the luxury of. The expression is used because an interview pleases them and at the same time costs them dear. The sentence means these men are utterly incapable of turning an interview to any use in business, though they may learn much from it—it may be a wholesome experience to them.

**Para 12. Information**—much knowledge. **Intellectual readiness**—quickness and presence of mind. He speaks of the power of quickly seizing a point, replying to an unexpected argument, making out what should be said or done at an unexpected turn of affairs, etc. **Two ways** : *i. e.* that a proposal admits of being either accepted or rejected—that a question can only be considered favourably or unfavourably. **Combinations**—diverse and complicated turns ; possible ways in which things may be grouped. It is well-known to students of Algebra that even taking a small number of things, the possible ways of grouping them in twos, threes etc. are very numerous. **Unprepared for** : which takes them completely by surprise. **Apprehend**—seize ; understand. **Main drift**—principal bearing or scope ; what it chiefly aims at.

**Para 13. Meeting**—who come too see each other. **Upon no terms** : not in positions equally advantageous (explained below—“one has a great deal” etc.) **Respecting**—regarding. **Great.....maintain**—much to lose (if he cannot conduct the interview skilfully) important interests at stake. **Nothing to lose** : are irresponsible persons, to whom failure would matter little. The author is speaking of a person or deputation interviewing a minister, in order to press some proposal upon the Government ; perhaps the suit is a “mere project of effrontery.” **Deputation**—a body of men professing to represent the interests of a class, (or who lay before the minister the resolutions of a public meeting on some question of the day) ; delegates of an association. **Public**—the state (the Government being, in a free country, the servants of the public.) **Concealed**—Because a premature avowal of these intentions might create an agitation, and seriously embarrass the Government. **Bias**—the views he inclines towards. **Keep himself avoid** committing himself in the least ; decline to promise anything, or furnish the slightest ground for hope **Interpreted against** :



explained in the way most damaging to him ; made to yield as much meaning in the shape of promise or encouragement) as possible. **Private life**—career of a private person (as distinguished from a minister &c.) **Act.....defensive**—maintain the attitude of one resisting the attacks or pressing solicitations of others ; that is, he has great interests at stake, and it is no use attacking his opponents (for they are insignificant and have nothing to lose. *Defensive* is opposed to *aggressive*, **Siege** : he who acts on the defensive may be likened to those who are besieged, and must direct all their energies to repelling the assaults of their adversaries ; whereas in a battle, there is “give and take”—blows exchanged on both sides. **Good.....reserve**—some of his most telling arguments to be used only in the last extremity—when the others fail. **Mystify**—confuse ; weaken by involving in a cloud of words. **Pervert**—distort ; misrepresent. **Set speech**—a regular or formal speech (which is taken advantage of in the way described in the next sentence.) **Room**—opportunity, **Semblance**—outward appearance ; what looks like (victory). **Victory**—triumph in debate. **Unimportant** : The really strong arguments being skillfully evaded.

**Para 14.** **By him**—with him, as ally. **Numbers**—several persons (a deputation, for instance.) **Meet**—reply to. **Proper fallacies**—plausible sophistries ; unsound but specious arguments. **Without an answer** may mean (i) before getting an answer from you ; or ii) without having any really effective reply available—any pertinent facts or arguments which favour their view. The latter meaning is preferable. **Satisfaction**—source of confidence. **Not.....hostile, i. e. friendly.** **Besides.....responsibility** : Another reason is that the presence of a friend or colleague will make it less easy for the other side to misrepresent what you say ; for it is a mistake to suppose that when there are several persons present on the other side, the danger from misrepresentation is less ; on the contrary, in such a cause every one is less attentive (fancying the others will remember what he does not), and feels less responsible personally. **Safeguard**—guarantee ; security. **Precise**—accurate in his language. **Impression** : What meaning his words conveyed to another (for it may be that though he intended to say one thing, his words might convey a rather different meaning.

**Para 15.** **Precaution**—step to guard against misrepresentation. **Apprehends.....do** : what he understands and remembers to have passed at the meeting, and what steps he means to take in the matter. **Great readiness** : because he must promptly decide what should be done, and at once recall what has been said. **Misapprehension**—misunderstanding. **Would warrant**—is important enough to make it worth while to be so formal. **Warrant**—justify. **Formality**—observance of forms. **In itself**—so far as the record

(the statement in writing) is concerned ; for the importance of such a document. **Its influence** : *viz* the wholesome effect of knowing that the substance of what is said will be set down in writing. **Prepared**—ready with arguments ; after having decided what to say. **Immediate** (has an adverbial force)—not distant or remote. **Prospect**—likelihood.

## ESSAY VI.

### OF COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS, &c.

**Substance** of the paragraphs :

1. *Utility* of councils etc. i) They render the conduct of business safe and smooth. .

2. (ii) From them an average of opinions on a subject may be obtained ; iii) they are less liable to corruption, or at least to a suspicion of it. iv) They are better able to defy unpopularity (v) Their decisions are more weighty.

3. (vi) They enable one to judge how a measure is likely to be generally received, and what popular prejudices it might have to confront.

4. *Drawbacks* : (i) division and consequent weakening of responsibility, leading to sloth. (ii) want of continuity of purpose.

5. (iii) Individual members might indiscreetly tell the world about their own share in any business.

6. Councils should not be too large, because (i) it would tempt members to a display of eloquence ; (ii) some members would not take part in the work, but only weaken the sense of responsibility in the rest ; (iii) it would cause interruptions and inconvenience, (iv) the council would more likely be split up into rival parties.

7. Strict observance of forms (even if the members are few) is necessary to prevent waste of time, and general laxity.

8. Of the three parts of business (*viz* preparation, discussion and conclusion) only the second should be done in council, to prevent loss of time. Distinct proposals should be submitted to a council, for even if finally rejected, they advance the matter more than mere loose discussions of random proposals.

9. The Responsibility of members should be secured by requiring a majority of them to sign the paper embodying the decision of the council. If *all* are required to sign, too much power is left to crotchety individual members and the signing would come to be thought merely formal.

10. Secretaries &c. should also show, by their signatures, for what work they are to be held responsible.

11. *Choice of members* : (i) There should be men of diverse natures.

12. (ii) A man disagreeable to associate with, is not likely to be a useful member. Pride and selfishness are not disqualifications, but vanity and a quarrelsome disposition are.

13. (iii) The most eligible members are those who are good humoured, practical men, not anxious to escape from responsibility, and willing to execute even what they were at first opposed to. The presence of such members has a wholesome effect on others too.

14. (iv) The most valuable members are those who possess method and judicial intellect, so as to be able to lead the rest, and prevent empty aimless discussion.

**Commissions** are bodies of men entrusted with some particular work especially of a temporary nature (*e. g.* The Opium Commission, which held its sittings in several towns in India last year)

**Para 1. Fly wheels**—heavy wheels which serve to keep machines continuously working (instead of working spasmodically or by sudden jerks.) **Safety-valve**—a hole or aperture in the boiler of a steam-engine for letting out steam when the pressure reaches a dangerous height. [A council or commission serves to check the fury or excessive enthusiasm on the part of the public, as well as of individual members; the latter finding that they must work with others, have to moderate their zeal, and agree to compromise; and the public, finding the matter in the hands of a council way, believe that something will be done, and become less impatient.] **Machinery &c** : complicated apparatus for managing affairs ;—organization. **Superfluities**—unnecessary appendages; things which may well be dispensed with. **Equalised**—rendered uniform; *i. e.* smooth working of every part of the machinery is secured. This is the function of a fly-wheel.

**Para 2. Apt contrivances**—fit or suitable instruments; well-devised means. **Average &c.**—ascertaining what various opinions prevail on a subject, and on what points there may be agreement among the largest number of people; finding out in what direction the views of the majority tend. **Ensuing**—securing. **Freedom from**—absence of. **Corruption**—evil practices—bribery, undue influence &c. **Reputation &c.**—general belief that there is no corrupt influence at work. **More courageous** : The reason is given below—no individual member is likely to become unpopular when the Council acts contrary to public opinion. **Bear odium**—put up with unpopularity; defy the abuse and outcry of the public (because the individual members do not feel such attack to be personally directed against them.) **Looks to**—takes into account; examines closely. **Personal**—of this or that man. **Predominating**—most powerful; determining. **Their doings**—decisions of a council. **In question**—being examined; under

discussion. [The sentence means—when the acts of any particular man form the subject of discussion, such acts are generally in the first instance attributed to the character of that man : it is said for instance that he is ambitious, and that is why he has done such and such a thing. But when the steps taken by a council are being criticised, no one thinks of accounting for them by reference to the character of particular members—the body is thought of as one whole.] **The very**—that same. **Indistinctness**—vagueness ; impersonal character. **Their corporate existence**—them, as made up of a body of men ; their character as corporations. **Weight**—authority ; air of wisdom. The author means that people are disposed to credit a council &c. with greater wisdom than would be attributed to the individuals composing it ; this they do for no other reason than because councils &c. are vague and impersonal, not supposed to be actuated by ordinary human passions and motives.

**Para 3. Generally received**—regarded by the public ; *i. e.* whether certain proposals will find favour in the eyes of the people or not. **Framing**—drawing up ; making a draft of. **Satisfactory conclusion**—reliable inferences. **Various appearances**—different aspects. **Present**—exhibit. **Made to present** : these words imply that the opponent of a measure will deliberately misrepresent it and thereby cause it to appear objectionable. [The sentence means—The ablest minister or official may be unable to anticipate in what light a measure will be viewed by different sections of the public, or how interested men will succeed in representing it to them. A council will materially help him to learn all this.] **To little &c.**—so remarkably free from vulgar prejudices. **Their force**—how strong these prejudices are. **Not to perceive**—fail to anticipate. **How.....received** : whether a new thing will be condemned or welcomed. **Joint information**—the total knowledge possessed by all the members. **Common nonsense**—(as opposed to *common sense*) prejudices and absurd notions entertained by many people ; foolish ideas generally prevalent. The author implies that among the members of a council, there are sure to be at least a few who will reflect the current prejudices. **Providing**—guarding ; to avoid offending those prejudices.

**Para 4. Much tempted** : hardly able to help feeling less responsible, and becoming more indolent in consequence. **Division** : instead of each one being responsible himself, he shares the responsibility with all the other members. **To dealing** : tempted to manage matters in a perfunctory way. **Continuity**—steadiness. As the persons composing the body change from time to time, the policy adopted by the council at one time is liable to be changed at another.

**Para 5. As it tends** : That the above advantages may not be lessened, it is the duty of every individual member to abstain from giving out to the public whether his own views are opposed to those of the majority ; he should take care not to let it be known



what share he has taken in the proceedings of the council—whether he has sided with the rest or protested against their decisions.

**Para 6 The proper number**—how many members it is desirable to appoint. **Vary according** : For instance an executive committee should always consist of a small number, while a deliberative or legislative body should be much larger. **Oratorical display**—exhibition of eloquence. When a good public speaker find himself in the presence of a large audience, he can hardly resist the temptation of showing his power ; but a small committee makes an elaborate speech seem ridiculous, and discourages such efforts. The author, like other practical men of business, has a contempt for flights of rhetoric. **Another limit** : It would also be prudent not to allow the number to be so large as to make it impossible for every member to bear his share of the work done—to have an opportunity of doing something. **By having** : if the number exceeds that limit, the business will not necessarily be more closely attended to. **But with a feeling** : if there are dummies—i. e. members who do nothing—the few who do the real work will only feel less directly responsible for the success of the business ; and they will moreover, be troubled by the obstruction to business resulting from the large number present.

**Para 7. Formalities**—established order or method, to be regularity ; rules of procedure ; e. g. that more than one person should not speak at one time, that discussion should be based on, motions and amendments, &c. **Such a state** i. e. as great confusion, or want of discipline. **Pepys** : Samuel Pepys (1632-1703) Secretary to the Admiralty in the reign of Charles II, famous for his Diary which throws a great deal of light on the history and state of manners in his time. **Privy Council** : The assembly (presided over by the sovereign) which alone discussed, and exercised supreme authority in, all affairs of state. **One feels** : Every reader feels sure (because the tone of Pepys has always the ring of truth and sincerity.) **True to the life**—vivid and perfectly accurate ; is not spoiled by exaggeration or desire for effect. **We to**—we went to. **Discourse** (now used only of abstract subjects)—talk ; discuss. **Pressing**—forcing men to enter the army or the navy. In times of war, press-gangs (bands of ruffians) were employed to get hold of men and prevail upon them, by force and artifice, to enter the King's service. **Lord** : an exclamation of surprise. **Never sit** i. e. the members do not take their seats—as they should do in discussing a matter of importance. **Nobody come** : colloquial for *has come*. **Annesley** (1614-86) Lord Privy Seal in the reign of Charles II. **Forced**—obliged. **He is here** : Of course the presence of the king ensured proper behaviour, and the observance of forms, out of respect for him.

**Para 8. Great art**—important secret. **Put before**—bring forward, for discussion or disposal. **In what state**—at what stage ; i. e. how far the matter should advance before it is brought forward in a council. **Present**—submit. **There be** : Business



may be divided into three parts. This use of *be* for *are* is obsolete, but was quite common in Elizabethan English. We are told that the extract here is taken from one of the famous *Essays* of Bacon—the Essay on *Dispatch*. **Preparation**—making a draft (of a law or measure.) **Perfection**—final disposal (used in the etymological sense.—*per*—through, *facio*—to do.) **Whereof**—of which three parts. **Dispatch**—expeditious disposal; quickly getting through some business. **Middle**: the debate. **Many** *i. e.* a council or large assembly. **In all.....vagueness**—when it is quite shapeless or indistinct—a mere mass of suggestions, as it must be at first. [Much time would be wasted in discussing the matter at this stage, because every one would bring in suggestions and modifications—most of these being presumably quite unpractical and useless.] **Submitted to**—presented before. **You might.....board**—It would be as absurd to expect a large assembly to draw up a scheme, or to take steps to carry it out, as it would be for an assembly to manage a love affair—to discuss how a man should set about winning a lady's affections. **Board**—a body of men entrusted with some particular work—*e. g.* School-Board, Board of Guardians, District Board. **In the council**—*i. e.* a member. **Subordinate to**—serving under. A secretary is evidently meant. **Wilderness &c.**—vast amount of talk, more or less irrelevant; confused mass of suggestions, amendments, comments and loose discussion. **Legitimate**—proper; relevant. **The proceeding upon** (not idiomatic now-a-days) to set to work upon; to take as a basis, or material. **Somewhat**—here equiv. to *something*, but now-a-days only used as an adv. **Conceived**—embodied; definitely expressed or drawn up. **For the most part**—generally; as a rule. **Facilitate**—help towards; makes it easier to get through the matter quickly. **Negative**—negating; rejection. **Pregnant of direction**—*lit.* contains the germs of the true method (of dealing with the matter); hence, serves to show what is to be done,—how the business is to be finally decided or disposed of. **Indefinite** (used as a noun) vague suggestions, or confused talk (*e. g.* a series of amendments, proposals, comments &c.—leading to no result.) **Ashes**: wood-ashes are meant, which were used as a manure for pasture grounds. The analogy is rather fanciful. **Generative**—productive. **Dust** represents the confused war of words in an assembly—the cloud of dust raised by a host of speakers, as it were—by the storm of discussion. [The sentence means—It helps dispatch to lay before an assembly some definite proposal; for even the complete rejection of it advances the matter further towards a final decision than mere aimless, vague talk; just as ashes (produced when a thing is destroyed by fire) assist future production, being useful as manure, while mere dust (to which such talk may be compared) is quite useless.]

**Para 9. Bring home to**—make the individuals deeply feel. **General body**—the Council or assembly as a whole. **Composing**—constituting; who form; who are the members of. **Directions**.



—orders (of the Council.) The sentence means—The best method of making each member feel deeply responsible for the acts of the Council is this : let a great majority of the members be required to sign the paper containing the decision of the Council. [In many cases directions are signed only by the President ; sometimes the Secretary is instructed to write out and communicate them ; but the author does not approve of such practice.] **Sort of aversion**—something like a rooted dislike. The responsibility implied by a signature is, the author says, generally recognised. **Whole body**—every one of the members. **For.....formality**—If all are required to sign, the signature would very probably come to be looked upon as a farce—a mere matter of form. [The reason being, that it is impossible for every member really to acquiesce in all the decisions of the body ; and so the signature ceases to be thought to imply assent.] **Degenerate**—become degraded ; lose its original significance. **And besides.....hindrance**—Another reason for condemning the practice of requiring all to sign is, that this would enable a single eccentric member to obstruct a business ; he might obstinately refuse to sign, and bring the affair to a standstill. **Crotchety**—having fads, peculiar views, or whims ; wayward ; unmanageable.

**Para 10. Committees**—smaller bodies (consisting of some members of the Council, and appointed by the latter for particular purposes ; e. g. the Select committees of Legislative councils, the School Committees of Municipal bodies and District Boards, &c. &c.) **Attested**—certified ; made manifest. That is, it should be shown clearly to what extent secretaries &c. are responsible in arranging various points in connection with a business.

**Para 11. Trifling**—making much of something unimportant ; mere waste of time. For such rules are of little use. **Diversity of natures**—men of different natures or dispositions. The members should not all be of the same stamp. **Various modes.....canvassed**—for if there are men of various disposition, it would be possible to ascertain and examine a number of different plans such as would recommend themselves to diverse temperaments. **Congenial to**—agreeable to ; in harmony with. **Canvassed**—discussed ; sifted.

**Para 12. Come to the surface**—show themselves plainly ; become manifest (in outward actions). **Social life**—dealing with their fellow-men ; when they associate with others. **Noted**—noticed ; observed. **Certain hindrance to**—sure to interfere with ; unmistakeable drawback. That is, we may be sure, that on account of those defects, the man would prove less serviceable than he would otherwise have been, as a member. **Proud, selfish, ill-tempered** : These are defects which a man may keep concealed, or exhibit only in domestic life ; and so these do not necessarily unfit a man to be a councillor. **Converse**—dealing. **Capable...opposition**—may not show himself irritated or put out when his opinions are contradicted or his proposals rejected. **Coadjutor**—

—colleague. He may be willing to work zealously with others. **Dictatorial**—overbearing ; *i. e.* if he insists on having his own way. **His efficiency.....counteracted**—He is sure to be much less useful (than he would otherwise have been) as a member. **Counteracted**—neutralised ; diminished.

**Para 13. Grace**—ornament. **Healthful**—sound ; opposed to morbid or diseased. **Content**—ready. **Take defeat**—behave when their proposals have been rejected. **Practical turn** : that happy frame of mind, so useful in business. **Makes them.....judgment**—by virtue of which they are able to engage in carrying out even those schemes and proposals which they at first opposed as injudicious (but which were adopted by a majority of the Council.) [Ordinary men are of course incapable of acting in this noble spirit and are sure to be meanly anxious to see such schemes fail in execution—so as to have the opportunity of triumphantly saying “ I told you so.” In his *Autobiography*, Vol. II. p. 127, Sir Henry Taylor applies to this class of statesmen the words of Brutus about Cicero (in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* ii.)—“ He will never follow anything which other men begin,” and goes on to say : “ Most statesmen are Ciceronian in this respect ; and the instinct of incubation is to hatch their own eggs and not those of another. If this is one instinct that we have to look to, another is self-preservation.”] **Shift &c.**—throw the responsibility on the shoulders of others, instead of their own ; try to make out that others, and not themselves, are to blame (in case of failure, or mishap.) **Former objections**—the opposition they at first offered to a scheme that has turned out badly.) **With triumph**—triumphantly ; exultingly ; with malignant delight. **Borne out**—proved to be true. The author means that the men who would make really good councillors must be free from that meanness which leads so many people to exult in the failure of any scheme which they objected to at the time. **At your ease**—free from anxiety ; quite safe. **You counsel** : With such colleagues, you will be able to express your own opinions in a straightforward manner—not timidly—for you would not then labour under a constant anxiety about your own safety. **Timorous** : Prof. Blackie censures the excessive “feeling of reverential respect for the spoken word,” which is apt to degenerate into a morbid anxiety, and a pale concern for tame propriety.”

**Para 14. Have method &c.**—are able to proceed methodically or systematically to work, and to decide a matter with the gravity and impartiality of a judge. **Judicial**—befitting a judge—given to weighing both sides of a question carefully. **Goes for nothing**—is wasted or perfectly thrown away. That is, a man may be very clever, and yet able to do little good in a Council, unless he possesses &c. &c. **To what.....tend**—in what direction the discussion is proceeding ; *i. e.* what conclusion, if any, is being reached. **Gather the sense**—get at the prevailing opinion ; catch the general spirit. **Mixed**—made up of men of

diverse opinions. **Honestly**—without doing violence to the convictions of some members ; without making it necessary for any section to act against their beliefs. **Meet**—recommend itself to ; be the means of reconciling. **They will bring back** : Men of this stamp will always return to the original point—the real point at issue—whenever the discussion is of a random desultory character, the other members having digressed from the point and been occupied with trifling and irrelevant matters, or in quarreling with one another. **All but**—nearly. **Floated away**—disappeared (in the heat of discussion.) **Looking for seaweed**—arguing about unimportant trifles (points started in the course of angry wrangling.) **Throwing stones**—abusing ; attacking.

## ESSAY VII.

### PARTY-SPIRIT.

#### Substance of the Paragraphs :

1. *Evils of Party-Spirit (a) Within the country* : (i) It is used as a pretext for malicious attacks ; (ii) causes waste of energy (iii) makes the people suspicious and uncharitable, inclined to think lightly of the offences of public men, and to pretend indignation not really felt.

2. *b) In the policy of the country towards dependencies and foreign countries*, it weakens that policy by making it depend on the opinion of a portion only of the community.

3. *(c) With regard to party-men themselves* ; it makes men (i) abjure independent thinking, (ii) meddlesome in a mean, narrow spirit.

4. (iii) It also makes people hasty in their attacks, insincere in defence, and violent in partisanship.

5. *Defence of party-spirit examined* : (a) It is urged that less strict rules govern party dealings than can be tolerated in other human affairs. This doctrine is dangerous, as lowering public morality.

6. *b) To say that those who hold right views in politics may be permitted to hate those who are wrong*, is opposed to the express teaching of Christ.

7. *Basis of political differences* : These are not due to personal qualities—though most men may be said to have a predisposition to one or other of the two great parties in a state.

8. Men join one party or another through (1) hereditary opinions, (2) feelings or supposed interests of the class they belong to, (3) prejudices of those they associate with, 4<sup>th</sup> direct self-interest, (5) the accident of living with a strong partisan in youth, (6) or of being associated with a political movement.



9. *Considerations in favour of political tolerance*: (a) party distinctions as shown above) are not based on any single principle, nor on the moral worth or baseness of those belonging to rival parties.

10. (b) We should learn to allow for the prejudices of others.

11. Because these prejudices are often no worse than signs of mental defects, which make men as impervious to sound arguments as if they were physically deaf.

12. (c) We should remember that we have our own prejudices too, and should be on our guard against them.

13. Though indeed it is well that we should have strong opinions, and try to give effect to them by all fair means.

14. (d) It is wrong to fancy that in every case the ruin of the country would follow the triumph of our opponents. Many such prophecies have been falsified by the event.

15. *Concluding remarks*: A free country must have rival parties, but care should be taken to make their contests generous; it would be useless and injudicious to foster political indifference—a remedy worse than the disease. Party spirit is often a rude kind of patriotism.

16. The practical question is how to regulate party-spirit, so that it may elevate and not degrade the character. This is to be effected by maintaining love of truth and promoting a charitable spirit.

**Party-spirit**—eager zeal in the interests of a party—a party being one of the great political bodies into which a community is divided.

**Para 1.** The opening sentence means—Under the influence of party-spirit men find an excuse for treating others very scornfully and maliciously; such conduct is only permitted because party-men pretend to be actuated by enthusiastic devotion to the interests of the state. [On the subject of this sort of extreme political bigotry and violent partisanship Sir Henry Taylor observes: “Political parties in those days (at about 1850) being divided by what they called principles and indeed by what were really principles in a derivative sense, the *odium politicum* (*i. e.* political hatred) partook of the same intensity and intolerance which is usually ascribed to *odium theologicum*; and political warfare was waged with a *personal rancour which could put on the mask of devotion to a so-called sacred cause*. From this resulted a habit and a license and allowance which extended far beyond the political arena, and a tendency on the part of the public and of juries to confound the tyranny of the press with the freedom of the press.”—*Autobiography*, Vol. II. 98-9.] **Pretext**—justification. **Exercise**—bringing into play (against men of the opposite party.) **Tolerated**: by the public, or society. **They**: scorn and malice. **Claim**—profess. **Have.....in**—arise or spring from; be caused by. **Fervent**—*lit.* burning; ardent. **Fervent wishes &c.**—glowing sense of public duty. **It consumes**: public-spirit thus causes a waste of energy; for the energy shown in attacking a rival party might do great good.



to the country if better used. **Idle**—useless. **State**—the whole people or community united into one body politic. The word is often used as synonymous with Government. **By.....uncharitable**—As party-spirit accustoms the people to hear public men of both parties constantly represented as vile, insincere and corrupt, it is natural that such men should come to be generally suspected and thought ill of. **Interchange &c.**—bitter recriminations ; mutual accusations. **Or it inclines :** Another possible result (of such bitter attacks), is that the people come to look upon the charges constantly made against the highest public men as venial (*i. e.* not very serious)—for it appears to the public as if hardly any politician of note is free from such accusations. [Offences which are said to be quite common, cannot long be regarded as very shocking ; so the tone of public morality becomes lowered by violent and indiscriminate abuse showered on party-men.] **Inclines them**—makes the people disposed. **Kind of offences :** *viz.* jobbery, corruption, fraud, intrigue, violation of promise, unscrupulousness &c.—these being the most serious charges generally brought against politicians. **Or it gives.....in vain** the quotation is probably from the author's favourite work,—Taylor's *Statesman*)—Another common result of party-spirit is to accustom people to a sort of hypocrisy—that of condemning severely, and pretending to righteous anger against, what are after all trivial offences, or what they do not really consider heinous ; this is a sort of moral blasphemy—it is making light of those sacred words, Truth and Virtue (for they pretend to far greater regard for Truth &c. than they honestly feel.) **Epithets**—words descriptive of quantities or attributes. For instance, such words as *unscrupulous unprincipled, base &c.* are freely applied to public men (whose worst fault perhaps is that they are not wholly unmindful of their personal interests—as only few men can be, as is well known to those using such epithets. **Affecting sensation**—making believe that they feel ; trying to pose as men of lofty principles, who are shocked at the slightest departure from a high standard of public duty. **Moral indignation**—virtuous wrath ; being shocked and angry [It seems to be implied that the hollowness of these sentiments is shown by the utter inability to see glaring defects in men of their own party.] **Bear no proportion to**—are out of proportion to, *i. e.* far exceed the offence) ; are much more severe than the circumstances of the case justify. **Taking.....in vain :** As oath or profane swearing (*e. g.* *By God, Zounds i. e. by His wounds &c.*) is condemned as blasphemous, as “taking the name of God in vain,” so it is a moral blasphemy to censure people in the name of Truth and Virtue, when we do not really care about truth and virtue, or when the case is too trifling to justify an appeal to Truth etc.

**Para 2. Dependencies**—subject states—*e. g.* India is a dependency of Great Britain. **In its foreign relations**—in dealing with other countries. **Whole force**—strength of the nation as a whole ; unanimous voice of the community. **Portion ; viz.** the party that happens to command a majority at the time, and out of which minis-

ters are chosen. **Bearing some reference to**—which depends to some extent on ; the power of this section being roughly proportional to. **Excess of strength**—whether the majority is a large or small one. [If the dominant party commands a narrow and precarious majority only (in Parliament as well as in the country), its decisions and threats carry little weight ; a discontented dependency, or a foreign country, is not likely to be much impressed by the attitude of the Government—which might at any moment be overthrown by the other party growing somewhat stronger ; and an unpopular war often exerts a fatally weakening effect on the party in power that engages in it. And even if the government is backed by a large majority, its strength cannot fail to be diminished by the determined and rancorous enmity of one section of the community. Thus before and during the late Russo-Turkish War, the remonstrances of the Conservative Government of Lord Beaconsfield had comparatively little weight with Russia, because the Liberals were known to be hostile to Turkey, and it was thought a war with Russia would probably bring the Liberals into power again. Indeed, it is admitted that party-government is a source of weakness in the foreign policy of Great Britain ; and that if it were not for the greater straightforwardness which generally distinguishes that policy, serious complications would have arisen in consequence.]

**Para 3. Abjure**—give up ; solemnly relinquish. **Independent thinking**—the right of each man to think (and form his opinions) for himself. A man's political opinions are derived from the leaders of his party, for party organisation would be broken up if each man claimed the right of private judgment in all matters. **It can leave :** Party-spirit has to interfere in all matters (in order to prevent disunion and consequent weakness.) **Uplift a hand**—interfere ; interpose. **Quarrel**—personal affair. **Knight-errant**—a knight in quest of adventures—seeking to redress the wrongs of the oppressed. *Errant* means wandering. In the medieval romances, knights are represented as seeking dangerous adventures for opportunities of doing good and thereby distinguishing themselves. **Of old**—of former times ; of the middle ages. **With.....chivalry**—though these party men are actuated by that noble spirit of courtesy and self-sacrifice which animated the knights. *Chivalry* means the characteristics of a *chevalier* (another word for *knight*) viz. the high sense of honour, love of fairplay, respect for women, passionate desire to befriend the weak and oppressed, &c. &c. [The knightly virtues are well-summarised in one of Tennyson's *Idylls*, *Guinevere*, as well as in the famous passage about Queen Marie Antoinette in Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, where the author deplores that "the age of chivalry is gone."] The sentence means that political partisans avail themselves of every possible opportunity of displaying their rancour—that wherever there is a dispute, they are sure to interfere, not from motives of disinterested

patriotism, but only to gratify their malignity and serve petty party purposes. **It forces....fitting**—Party-spirit leads people to thrust themselves upon others, posing as friends when these others belong to their own party (but often dislike such officiousness) or as enemies, in the case of political opponents who may have given no cause of personal offence to the meddlers; and whether it is friendship or enmity that they offer gratuitously, it is equally unbecoming and unjustifiable. **Forces**—officiously or violently offers. **Odious**—hateful; intensely disagreeable (because such meddling is uncalled for, and brings man's affairs prominently before the public, much to his annoyance). **Unprovoked**—not grounded on any reasonable pretext; unwarrantable. **Fitting**—proper; called-for. **Require.....against it**—are liable to be unduly swayed by party feeling; are apt to think and act wrongly under the influence of party-spirit. **Insidious**—sly; which enter and influence the mind in a subtle, stealthy manner. The prejudices (due to party feeling) against the character, opinions and actions of men of the opposite party are very hard to resist. **Dirt and insects**: These are seen greatly magnified, and might be mistaken (by a careless observer) for curious objects in the field of vision. It is said that an astronomer was thus actually led to announce the discovery of a new heavenly body and startle the scientific world. Similarly Prejudices delude party-men into fancying they have discovered vile motives or dangerous aims on the part of their political opponents. **Blur**—render indistinct; obscure. **View**—prospect; field of vision. **Strange monsters**—*viz.* the magnified images of the specks of dirt or insects, and (in the case of prejudices) the monstrous suspicions and misrepresentations of the character views and conduct of men of the other party. **Where...none**—which are altogether imaginary; having no real existence.

**Para 4. Incites**—urges on; stirs. **With rashness**—recklessly; without judgment. **Without sincerity**—while knowing that the defence is a false one; what they feel to be indefensible. That is, men fancy that they are bound to support even the most questionable acts of their own party; blind adherence or loyalty to their own party leads people to justify what they know to be unjustifiable. This is further explained below. **Violent partisans**—political bigots. **Make.....personal**—hold that he himself is responsible (for all the measures &c. of his party); ~~pretend that their antagonist represents his party in, and is himself to blame for, all matters.~~ **As if**: of course this is often quite false—the attack being a rash one. **Chief agent**—leading actor; one who is most responsible. **Nor does.....condemns** This illustrates how people “defend without sincerity”—And on the other hand the person thus wrongfully held responsible for the misdeeds of his party, unquestioningly acknowledges his responsibility and seeks only to prove that what he (and his party) are charged with are really

wise and meritorious acts ; though he knows the acts to be unjustifiable, and would unhesitatingly call them so under other circumstances. He believes that loyalty to his party demands not only that he should (falsely) take the blame on himself, but that he should defend the most questionable deeds of his party.

**Para 5. Take shelter under**—seek justification through ; pass muster, or escape censure, by means of. **Unfounded**—groundless ; false. **Supposition**—theory. **Party dealings**—conduct or behaviour of one party towards another. **Are different &c.**—stand upon another footing altogether. **Governed**—regulated ; controlled. **Looser**—less rigid, or severe ; allowing much greater latitude. [The sentence means—People seem to think that the conduct of party men should not be judged according to the rules of conduct applicable in ordinary transactions—that party-men must be allowed to behave more unscrupulously, to employ more questionable means to bring about the triumph of their own side, than would be excusable in other affairs of life. But this supposition is utterly untenable (and a dangerous one to encourage, as the author says below.) **Dangerous** : Because if a double standard of morality be permitted, the lower one is pretty sure to become generally prevalent—the higher one gradually falling into abeyance in all other affairs as well. **Acknowledge two sorts &c.**—admit that in certain dealings men are justified in being less strictly truthful, and more uncharitable towards their opponents—*i. e.* more hasty in condemning &c.—than is permissible in other departments of life (*i. e.* in dealings between private men).

**Para 16. Is there.....adversaries** The question of course implies an affirmative answer)—It is demoralising to accustom ourselves to be always uncharitable towards men of the opposite party, to presume in all cases that they are actuated by the basest motives imaginable. **Are we.....temple**—It cannot surely be right for us to look down with hatred and contempt upon the party hostile to us, as the Jews looked down upon the Samaritans ; since we know that Christ protested against this Jewish spirit of hatred towards a neighbouring nation, and this should teach us to be less intolerant of political differences. **Samaritans**—inhabitants of the country (Samaria) north of Judea,—a race formed by the mixture of Jewish blood with that of other races, and whom the Jews detested so much, that the word *Samaritan* became a by-word of contempt amongst them. Christ however was free from this narrow intolerant spirit ; and our author says that the kindness he showed towards a Samaritan woman and other Samaritans should teach Christians a lesson of tolerance and charity towards political adversaries. **Nothing that** : The passage in the Bible where the story occurs is in the *Gospel of John*, ch IV. **Heard or read** : The author means that even those who have not read for themselves the above passage, may have heard its contents spoken of by some



preacher or clergyman. **Abate**—lessen. **Jewish**—as bitter as the hatred entertained by the Jews against the Samaritans.) [The Jews were “good haters” to use Dr. Johnson’s phrase, they despised all other nations, and divided the population of the earth into Jews and Gentiles ;—this feeling of aversion being (as is usual) most bitter towards their nearest neighbours, the Samaritans, who differed least from them in religion and blood.] **Brethren**—fellow-countrymen. **Do not worship etc.**—who do not share our political opinions. The Samaritans were not allowed by the Jews to assist, as they wished to do, in building the second temple at Jerusalem ; they then set up a sanctuary of their own on Mt Gerizim. **This is an illustration** : The noble teaching of Christ in this connection is so clearly applicable to party-dealings, that narrow-minded political partisans cannot by any means explain it away ; the above illustration drawn from the antipathy of the Jews towards the Samaritans, which Christ censured, meets the present case so exactly, that it is impossible etc. etc. **Bigots**—enthusiasts ; fanatics. **Cannot escape** : cannot reasonably deny that the illustration fits their case to a nicety. **Even...them**—indeed the fact that these bigoted partisans claim to be infallible only makes the illustration more exactly applicable to their case. In asserting that they hold correct views on all political questions, these bigots only make the parallel between themselves and the Jews closer or more exact. (This is shown below.) **Jews were right** : For we are told in the Bible the Jews held the true faith, or their mode of worship was more correct than that of the Samaritans, and this infallibility is what bigoted party-men claim for themselves. **Salvation...Jews** (These words of Christ are quoted from *John* iv 22, to prove the truth of the above statement.)

...true one—theirs is the faith that  
 hereafter. **But this behaviour** :  
 right and the Samaritans wrong in  
 matters of faith is not regarded in the Bible as any reason for the antipathy of the former towards the latter. That is, Christ says that the Jews were in the right in matters of faith and worship, but at the same time censures the Jews for hating and despising the Samaritans ; it is clear therefore that the party claiming to be always in the right, are not justified in being uncharitable towards their political opponents.

**Para 9. To hear**—when we hear ; from the language indulged in by some political enthusiasts. **One would** : it might naturally be taken for granted that the fact of a man belonging to one party rather than another serves to show his moral or intellectual nature. This is explained below. **They depended** : That men join one or other of two rival parties according to the qualities characterising them as individuals. **Ranged in a row**—found arrayed in a body. That is, the belief of these people is that one side has a monopoly



of all the worthy men in the state, while the other party consists solely of the bad. **Utmost.....alleged**—all that one can maintain consistently with truth—without gross exaggeration. **Predisposition**—natural inclination ; predilection in favour of &c. That is, some men are constitutionally averse to change, and would naturally incline towards the Conservative party ; while others are more sanguine, or restless, and would be more likely to join the Radicals or Liberals. **Every free country** : Thus in England, there are the Liberals and the Conservatives ; in the United States of America the Republicans and the Democrats ; in the Netherlands, the Liberals and the Anti-Liberals. In some countries, now constitutionally governed, there are, however, more parties than two—*e.g.* in Germany, France, and Italy. **But this.....party**—We cannot, however, assign such natural leaning as the usual reason why men join this or that party ; *i.e.* it is in comparatively few cases only that men may be said to join a party on account of a natural preference or affinity. **Determines**—decides.

**Para 8. As it is**—judging from actual facts ; as we find the case to be. **Some range....reflection**—It depends greatly upon accident, or comparatively trifling and unforeseen reasons, which side men take in politics ; they give themselves, as a rule no more trouble to balance the reasons for and against joining a political party, than school boys do when forming cricket or football parties. **In all ranks**—not only amongst the aristocracy, but also amongst the various sections of the middle and lower classes. **Hold hereditary opinions**—cling to the political views of their fathers ; inherit, as it were, the opinions of their ancestors. That is some families are Liberals, and almost every scion of them on reaching age, joins the ranks of Liberals ; while others have Conservative views running from father to son. **Convictions**—strong views ; opinions believed in implicitly, or clung to tenaciously. **Subservient to**—wholly dependent on, or subordinate to. [These men do not arrive at political opinions by reasoning—they do not care for arguments ; they take up and adhere to those opinions which are naturally congenial to men of their class, and which seem to promote the interests (real or imaginary) of that class. Thus landowners would be inclined to join the party opposed to the extension of town franchise—when such extension is regarded as likely to endanger the influence of the landed interest ; while members of the working classes would be inclined to join the Radicals, who are always proposing measures for the benefit of the poorer sections of the community.] **Little mob**—small band of thoughtless, noisy people ; the narrow ill-formed circle in which they move. **Comfortable**—giving the least trouble ; costing the least effort. The word is somewhat sarcastic. **Direct self-interest** : Some men join a party when they see some immediate or palpable advantage in doing so. **Merest**—the most trifling or unlooked for. **Uninformed**—ignor-

ant, or rather not possessed with any particular theory. **Malleable**—open to impressions ; capable of being moulded or influenced. **Slight bias**—no very strong leaning. *Bias* (from L. *bi* double, and *facies* face) properly means a weight on the side of a bowl (wooden ball used in the once popular game of Bowls) which turns it from the straight line ; hence bent or prepossession. **Set down**—generally regarded. **Some way or other** : *e. g.* presiding or taking some other part (such as moving a resolution) at a political meeting. **Politically**—in connection with some public question. **Whose thoughts . . . vague**—who has but scanty and confused ideas about politics. **Impressed**—stamped ; *i. e.* he comes to be recognised as a Liberal or a Conservative, though he has done or thought little to deserve the name. **Deepen**—intensify. **Decided**—confirmed.

**Para 9. A true analysis** : If we look into and ascertain how parties are composed,—what different elements enter into the rival parties—we might learn to be more charitable towards political opponents. **What a mixed &c.**—How many different elements or kinds of people a party consists. **Single law**—one principle in common, one tie or bond. **Cohesion**—union ; the fact of these various elements sticking together. **Still less &c.** It is even more unreasonable to assert. **Insisting**—strongly or obstinately holding. **Origin in moral worth** : are due to the fact that some men are virtuous, and others wicked (the former belonging to our own party, that latter to the opposite party.) **Turpitude**—baseness.

**Para 10. Train**—accustom ; learn by practice. **Make . . . allowance for**—bear with as far as is proper ; not be too hard upon. The difficulty of allowing for these prejudices is explained in the following para.

**Para 11. Pascal (1623-62)**—a great French thinker and writer—distinguished first as a mathematician and then for his religious writings—the best known of which are the *Pensees* or thoughts, and the *Provincial Letters*. **Whence . . . pass**—How is it ; how does it happen. **Have patience with**—can bear with ; are not offended or irritated against. **Maimed**—crippled. **So little** : full form—"that we have so little patience." **It is because** : The reason is that he who is defective in body admits his inferiority, (and claims our compassion.) **Fool**—"defective in mind." **We are . . . understanding**—that so far from being inferior to us, he surpasses us (ordinary people) in intelligence. This of course prevents us from feeling pity for him. **Halt**—are cripples ; *i. e.* are imperfect in point of intelligence. **Both our** : *i. e.* both the physical and the mental cripple would move &c. **Aid to charity**—what makes it easier to be lenient or compassionate towards the failings of others. The sentence means—We should be more disposed to be charitable towards others, if we could bring ourselves to ignore this difference between the physical and the mental cripple

—if we were to look upon the prejudices of others as nothing but unfortunate defects. (The next sentence amplifies the same idea.)

**Whether a man &c.** If a man is deaf (in body) he cannot of course be influenced by any arguments—simply because he cannot hear them ; but a man labouring under a strong prejudice is quite as hopelessly incapable of appreciating an argument, however conclusive, for this prejudice causes an insensibility to whatever seems opposed to it. **Ever...side** : Prejudice is compared to an evil counsellor or favourite who being a constant companion is sure to be heard in the first instance. **Sort of numbness**—something like the benumbing influence of extreme cold ; inability to understand or to be swayed by, any reasons &c. **It comes nearly** : the effect is almost the same so far as the influence of unpalatable arguments is concerned ;—i. e. he is sure to be equally indifferent or impervious to the arguments, whether he is deaf or prejudiced. **Cause is decided** : the man comes to a decision. **Fully heard** : proper attention being bestowed on what we have to say.

**Para 12. But at.....own** : We should not merely seek to become less intolerant by thinking in the above manner, but we should try to keep ourselves free from prejudices. **Impatience**—intolerance. **Vigilant**—strict. **We often forget**. We generally commit a double mistake, in failing to take account, firstly, of the fact that we labour under party prejudices of our own, and secondly that our antagonists equally labour under theirs. **Give...credit for**—flatter ourselves that we possess. **Judicial**—worthy of a judge. Cf. “judicial intellect” in the last para of the preceeding essay. **Public affairs**—state concerns ; political matters. **Call upon**—demand. **Assert** : strongly maintain that we are (though this is an error.) **But few** : I am afraid, however, that most of us have no right to boast of our impartiality. **High ground**—the lofty position of one free from prejudices ; superiority on account of &c. &c. **Master us** get the better of our reason. **Our enemies** : that we often sacrifice our interests under the influence of our strong passions. **Our prejudices.....honour**—We are like those lunatics who imagine that they are kings, and that their keepers form a body of attendants for them ; because though our prejudices deprive us of the power of independent judgment, we are often proud of them. **Imprison us**—enslave our reason.

**Para 13. I do not mean** :—The reader must not infer from the above remarks, that strong opinions are wrong, and compromises always proper in matters of opinion ; we hear some people constantly say that ‘both parties are in the wrong,’ and that ‘there is partial truth in the views of both’ ; but such words are not so philosophical as they sound ; it is not always the tolerant and candid or outspoken sort of men who use such words, but the lazy, who do not take the trouble to form decided opinions. **Middle courses**—steering between two extremes—between the opinions of

two contending parties. **Particularly philosophic**—exceptionally wise, the result of deep thought. The author means that the remarks that follow are quite commonplace, and show no great power of thought. **Great deal to be said**—many considerations in favour of. That is, we should not adopt off-hand either the one view or the opposite view ; for there is much to make us hesitate between the two. **Phrases** : supply “these being.” **Let a man.....disorder**—On the contrary, it is well that a man should be earnest and firm in his opinion, and that he should endeavour to give effect to that opinion in every way honestly open to him (*i. e.* not by underhand methods, or mean mischievous tricks) ; but the opinion should be really such—and not a mischievous prejudice or fancy caught from others, like a disease that is catching. **Bring action**—carry it out in practice. **In truth an opinion**—an opinion properly so called, *i. e.* the result of sound independent judgment. **Inhaled**—breathed in ; that is, borrowed thoughtlessly (and echoed or circulated.) The author refers to those unreasonable outcries against measures, parties or individual statesmen, which are taken up by unthinking people and cause great mischief.

**Para 14. Persuade themselves**—bring themselves to believe. **Well-being**—prosperity. **Something like** : as unstable, frail, or precarious as the health and welfare of individual men. As the life of a nation is far longer than that of individuals, so there is no reasonable fear of a State being ruined by an unfortunate measure, or unwise policy, at least in the course of a single generation. **See portentous things** :—fancy that every subject of bitter party strife is a matter of life and death to the State—that the State would be ruined if the subject be decided in the way they disapprove of. **Portentous**—ominous (of evil) ; fraught with the serious consequences. **Such fancies &c.** When men labour under such delusions, they can hardly be expected to show a charitable spirit ; they are sure to be more bitter in their antipathy towards political opponents. **Bear much killing**—endure or survive many such gloomy anticipations ; remain standing, after it has been again and again pronounced to be tottering, or on the point of ruin. **It has outlived.....ones**—The gloomy prophecies of disappointed politicians have turned out false generation after generation—the State has not gone to “wreck and ruin” as was anticipated ; and it is likely to last in spite of the croakings of those who foretell its speedy ruin at the present day. **Many generations** : *e.g.* there were not wanting men (like Goldsmith) who thought the condition of England desperate in the middle of the last century, especially during the contests between the Government and Wilkes, (and at the outbreak of the war with the American colonies : similar predictions prevailed in the days of the great French Revolution ; but the most confident prophecies of impending ruin were indulged in) by the anti-Reform party—the Tories) during the struggle over the



Reform Bill in 1830-2. "**Present ones** : the author seems to mean the bitter opponents of the Anti-Corn Law League, who thought the introduction of Free Trade must destroy the commercial supremacy of England, and might endanger her very existence. The author assumes a mildly sarcastic tone towards those fanatical partisans who regard the possible success of the opposite party with such extravagant dread.

**Para 15. Divisions**—parties. **Practical** : as opposed to *abstract or theoretical*. **Dispense**—do away. It is impracticable to abolish party distinctions. **Make.....it**—turn it to the best use possible ; to minimise the evils resulting from party-spirit. **Have.....generosity**—be conducted in a less bitter, intolerant spirit ; party-men may learn to be animated by nobler motives, and to use only fair means in party struggles. **Shunning &c.**—declining to join any party ; keeping themselves aloof from both parties. [If only men of an inferior type were to join parties, the tone of political morality would be still further lowered—party-struggles would be waged more factiously and unscrupulously. See below.] **Their duty** : duty as citizens—what is due from them to their country. See extract from Burke, below. **Face**—encounter ; boldly meet. The sentence means, It would be cowardly on the part of the best men to seek safety by avoiding politics altogether, and thus neglecting their duties to the country. **It would.....feelings**—Apathy in political affairs is a very bad remedy for ~~savage~~ party strife ; and it is not even a reliable remedy. For many who do not care for the good of the state, are often very bitter and unscrupulous party-men. **Doubtful**—of questionable expediency. The remedy would be worse than the disease—if men came gradually to allow all manner of folly and corruption to go on unchecked in the State. **Take.....granted**—assume that growing indifference would lessen the bitterness of party warfare. **Attachment.....kind**—The tie that binds men together in a party, may be a noble sentiment, lifting men above petty selfish ends. **And it must...patriotism**—We must admit that party-spirit is a sort of patriotism—though not of a refined or lofty kind ; and this is true even in the case of those partisans who do not perceive that a party should exist for the benefit of the State (and not the State for a party,) and who carry party-warfare beyond its proper bounds. **True end** : *viz.* the welfare of the country, which may be more effectually secured if a strong organisation exists to prevent abuse of power, the passing of useless and mischievous laws &c. **Limits** : what subjects should be excluded from the range of party politics, and what means should not be resorted to etc. **Rude kind &c.**—the beginnings of, or a low type of, Patriotism. Party-spirit takes men beyond purely selfish ends, makes them care for other things, and so gradually prepares them to prefer public good to private interests. [The following extracts from Burke, an eloquent defender of Party,



are of interest ; they are all taken from the concluding part from his *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* : “ *When bad men combine, the good must associate, or else they fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.*” “No men can act with effect, who do not act in concert.....who are not bound together by common opinions, common affections, and common interests.” Good men, Burke repeatedly says, should not hold themselves aloof from parties ; for “it is not enough that a man means well to his country ; it is not enough that in his single person he never did an evil act, but always voted according to his conscience. This innoxious and ineffectual character, that seems formed upon a plan of apology and exculpation falls miserably short of the mark of public duty. *That duty demands that what is right should not only be made known, but made prevalent ; that what is evil should not only be detected, but defeated.*.....I admit that the behaviour of many parties should have made persons of tender and scrupulous virtue somewhat out of humour with all sorts of connection in politics. *I admit that people frequently acquire in such confederacies (i. e. parties) a narrow bigoted spirit, that they are apt to sink the idea of the general good, in this circumscribed and partial interest. But where duty renders a critical situation a necessary one, it is our business to keep free from the evils attendant upon it, and not to fly from the situation itself.* Every profession, not excepting the glorious one of a soldier, or the sacred one of a Priest, is liable to its own particular vices, which however form no argument against those ways of life. Of such a nature are connections in politics,—essentially necessary for the full performance of our public duty, accidentally liable to degenerate into faction.” Definition of party, and its ends : “Party is a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle upon which they are all agreed,.....Every honourable connection will avow it as their first purpose, to pursue every just method to put the men who hold their opinions into such a condition as may enable them to carry their common plans into execution with all the power and authority of the State. As this power is attached to certain situations (*viz.* those of ministers), it is their duty to contend for these situations.” The above remarks, and the passage that follows, show how *party-spirit is a sort of patriotism*. “They (the Roman patriots) believed private honour to be the great foundation of public trust ; *that friendship was no mean step towards patriotism* ; that he who, in the common intercourse of life, showed he regarded somebody besides himself, when he came to act in a public situation, might probably consult some other interest than his own.]”

**Para 16.. The question** : What we have to consider is, the best method of bringing party-spirit under control—of keeping it within proper bounds. **Like all.....character**—There is a danger

lest this sentiment should completely dominate us—should change our character for the worse (by making us indifferent to other virtues) ; for whatever feeling is constantly indulged in tends to prevail over all others. **One who.....evil**—If a man has no high motives or principles strong enough to combat this tendency, or if his nature readily yields to the evil promptings of party-spirit, party spirit is sure to lead him astray ; he cannot resist its sinister influence. **Much that** : such qualities as malice, cruelty envy &c **Assimilates with**—chimes in with ; fosters ; co-operates with. **Worst influences** : as described in the opening paragraphs. **Show the earnestness** : prove that he is sincere in his love and allegiance to his party, by trying to raise the party to a higher moral level. **Elevate its character**—(see below) give a higher tone to it ; make it more just, charitable, truly patriotic, etc. **Utmost heat** : when party struggles are keenest ; when each side is earnestly bent upon achieving a victory. [The author is thinking of the time of a General Election (of Members of Parliament), and of struggles over great measures, such as the Reform Bill, or the Corn Laws. During the last few years, the fiercest party contests have centred round the scheme of Home Rule for Ireland.] **Maintain.....truth**—prevent party-men from attacking or defending “ without sincerity.” **Charities of life**—social amenities ; good manners and kindly, tolerant behaviour. He will oppose any display of a savage unrelenting enmity towards political opponents. Burke says “ It is our business most carefully to cultivate in our minds every sort of generous and honest feeling that belongs to our nature.”

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# QUESTIONS.

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY B. A. EXAMINATION, 1879.

1. Explain with reference to the context, and to the words in italics :—

(a) Imagination is its slave of the lamp.

(b) Do not suffer yourself to be carried away by the *current* sayings about men's character and conduct. If you do, you are helping *to form a mob*.

(c) His former certainties are among the strangest things a man looks back upon in the *vista* of the past.

(d) An interview may be considered not as a battle but a siege.

(e) Councils are the *fly-wheels* and *safety-valves* of the machinery of business.

(f) Hope, an architect above rules, can build in reverse a pyramid upon a point.

F. A. EXAMINATION, 1886.

*Examiner*—Mr. Mann.

2. Give the leading thoughts of the Essay on Party-Spirit.

3. Give the substance of Helps' description of the perfect man of business. Illustrate the remark that "the essential qualities for a man of business are of a moral nature." What does he say of Bacon's writings in connection with the education of the man of business?

4. Explain the following passages :—

(a) Hope, and architect.....point.

(b) Contemplation and action ought ever to be united, a conjunction like unto that of the two highest planets Saturn and Jupiter.

(c) It is with advice as with taxation, we can bear very little of either if it comes to us in the direct way.

(d) Our prejudices imprison.....honour.

- (e) Imagination, if it be subject.....lamp.
- (f) Courts of reason.....persons.
- 5. Explain the allusions in the following :—  
 “The ring of Eastern story which reminded the wearer,  
 by its change of colour, of his want of shame.”

F. A. EXAMINATION, 1890.

6. What is meant by Practical Wisdom ? Show that it has nothing to do with Epicureanism. Name the chief causes of self-torment. How should they be avoided ? What rules are to be observed in giving advice and maintaining secrecy ?

7. What is a man of business ? How should such a man be trained ? What considerations should guide us in the choice of agents ? What are the chief advantages and defects in the conduct of business by councils ?

8. Explain, with reference, if necessary, to the context :

(a) It is idol worship to substitute the form for the spirit ; but it is a vain philosophy which seeks to dispense with the form.

(b) They are up to their lips in the present, though they taste it none the more for that.

(c) In general it is with advice as with taxation, we can bear very little of either if they come to us in the direct way.

(d) The courts of reason.....persons.

(e) The oracles will Philippize, as long as Philip is the master ; but still they have an inner meaning for Athenian ears.

(f) The state will bear much killing.

9. Write an essay on *one* of the following subjects :—

(a) The use of physical training in education.

(b) Ordinary student life at college.

(c) The effects of a great inundation.

F. A. EXAMINATION, 1891.

10. Write explanatory notes on the following passages :—

(a) The destitute peasantry of our sister-land.

(b) Those who never exchange any discourse with us but the talk of the market place.

(c) Most persons require its magic aid to gild their castles in the air.

(d). There is a deafness peculiar to suitors.

11. What is meant by Party-spirit? What are its chief evils?

12. Distinguish between a "full man" and a "ready man." Explain what is meant by the maxim "The pen may be a surer, but the tongue is a nicer instrument."

13. Write an essay on *one* of the following subjects :—

(a) Kindness to animals.

(b) "The proper study of mankind is man."

#### MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS.

14. Expand the following remarks : (a) Party-spirit is often a rude kind of patriotism. (b) Prudence may enable a man to conquer the world, but not to rule his own heart. (c) Contentment abides with truth. (d) Sorrow is at once the lot, the trial, and the privilege of man. (e) Coercion is but a small part of government. (f) Connivance creates uncertainty, and gives an example of slyness. (g) Time is told by that pendulum man. (h) The best teachers are those who can seem to forget what they know full well. (i) The men who profit least by interviews are often those who are most inclined to resort to them. (j) In giving any reasons at all, you lay some foundation for a future request.

15. Illustrate by means of concrete examples (real or imaginary) the opinions quoted below :—

(a) Under the influence of party-spirit, a nation sometimes acts towards its dependencies, and in its foreign relations, not with the whole force of the country, but with a portion of it only.

(b) Party-spirit incites people to attack with rashness and to defend without sincerity.

(c) Let him not think to break his fall by asking their advice beforehand.

(d) Advice is not unwelcome when we derive it for ourselves by applying the moral of some other person's life to our own, though the points of resemblance which bring it home to us may be far from flattering.

(e) They will doubt whether you can know what is



best for them, if they have good reason for thinking that you are likely to leave their particular views of happiness entirely out of account.

(f) We seldom know with sufficient exactness the facts upon which we judge and a little thing may make a great difference when we come to investigate motives.

16. Give the reasons by which the following sayings are supported in the text :—

(a) A great deal of discomfort arises from over-sensitiveness about what people may say of you or your actions.

(b) Much fretting might be prevented by a thorough conviction that there can be no such thing as unmixed good in the world.

(c) They do not know that practical wisdom is as far from what they term expediency, as from impracticability itself. (Describe the class of men referred to in *they*.)

(d) Do not imagine that the general opinions you hear are free from mistakes merely because they are made, or appear to you to be made, by a great many people.

(e) Of all the errors in judging of others, some of the worst are made in judging of those who are nearest to us.

(f) As to the notion of waiting for the power to do good, it is one that we must never listen to.

(g) But any deprivation of this kind would be readily endured, if we only took the view of our social relations that Christianity opens to us.

(h) To govern a family many find to be a harder task than to govern a province.

(i) Domestic rule requires the perpetual exercise of love in its most extended form.

(j) Ridicule is too strong a remedy.

(k) In seeking for a friend to advise you, look for uprightness in him, rather than for ingenuity.

(l) To repeat what you have heard in social intercourse is sometimes a sad treachery.

(m) Love of truth conduces to the highest intellectual development.

(n) It is often worth while to bestow much pains in gaining over foolish people to your way of thinking; and you should do it soon.

(o) You must not interfere unnecessarily with your agents.

(p) When the suit is a mere project of effrontery, it

will perhaps be prudent to refuse, without entering at all upon the grounds of your refusal.

17. What practical suggestions does the author base upon the following considerations?

(a) There are occasions where the interview may be considered not as a battle, but as a siege.

(b) These bodies are much tempted by the division of responsibility to sloth.

(c) Councils are serviceable as affording some means of judging how things are likely to be generally received.

(This makes it desirable to have a "diversity of natures" among the members of a council.)

(d) There are people who do not understand any dissent or opposition on your part, unless it is made very manifest.

(e) The reasons which you give are generally taken to be the whole, or at any rate, the best that you have.

(f) To very few are given all the qualities requisite to form a good man of business.

(g) Few persons have tact enough to perceive when to be silent, and when to offer you counsel or condolence.

*THE END.*

